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REVITALIZING RELIGION

ALBERT EDWARD DAY

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REVITALIZING RELIGION

BY
ALBERT EDWARD DAY

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To MY CHILDREN

RUTH LUCILE
HELEN McKAY
DOROTHY
BENJAMIN WILSON
MARY ELLEN,

who have taught me more than this book contains
and in whom religion has in simple and unaffected
ways revealed its inexhaustible vitality.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	From Study Windows	7
II.	God in the World To-day	13
III.	Jesus the Revealer	27
IV.	Contemporary Divinity	38
V.	On Being Saved	48
VI.	Shall We Repent?	58
VII.	Faith That Functions	68
VIII.	Do We Fight Alone?	77
IX.	Religion and Conduct	89
X.	Have We Any Word From God?	101
XI.	The Church in Modern Society	111
XII.	Mortals and Immortality	123

CHAPTER I

FROM STUDY WINDOWS

RELIGION does not count in the careers of a multitude of our contemporaries. Their search for success leads them to technical schools rather than to prayer meetings. In the pursuit of happiness they are much more apt to take dancing lessons than a course in comparative religions. When sick it is the physician or the psychiatrist, and not the preacher, whom they summon. If they want truth, they attend a lecture and not a sermon; they open a book rather than a church door. They are not worried about their sins; when they feel that they must escape from the tensions of life they do not attempt to find wings in the vicinity of some mercy seat; they climb into a car and flee to wood or stream, to golf club or night club, or, as a last desperate resort, to the "talkies." If questions of conduct are to be decided, they either meekly accept family and class tradition or rashly proclaim themselves Philistines and follow their most imperious instincts, whether of acquisition or of sex; they do not solemnly inquire of the Lord or of any of his anointed. If they are intellectual and serious, they quote Walter Lippmann; if they want to appear intellectual without the bother of that seriousness which all true intellectual achievement involves, they recite the sayings of Aldous Huxley. If they are merely smart and somewhat bilious, H. L. Mencken is their prophet. In any case they do not refer to the decrees of the Vatican nor to the Scriptures, nor even to the latest pronouncement of the Federal Council of Churches.

At the International Art Exhibit in Pittsburgh two years ago there was a section set apart for Russian paintings. Some of these canvases were grotesque, almost bizarre, but all of them gave the impression of tremendous vitality, as if the social

milieu from which they came was throbbing with some strange, inarticulate energy which had not yet found finished forms of artistic expression, but must get itself uttered somehow. One of the arresting pictures in that group was of a pinched, anæmic, worried clergyman vainly attempting to sell among his neighbors the curious little wooden effigies which were his stock in trade. He had nothing living or life-giving to offer—only painted dolls. A vital art saw in religion nothing more than a collection of lifeless and childish toys. That artist has given expression to something American as well as Russian—to a widespread opinion, revealed more often in practice than in speech, that there is nothing in religion to concern a man who is interested in life. That is the first impression which breaks the heart of the preacher or teacher who looks out of his study windows upon the passing multitude.

And the second is like unto it. Within the church itself are many on whose stage religion plays no living rôle. So far from being the star of the cast it is not even a "super." Perhaps its most descriptive analogue is the curtain, which is often gayly decorated as a sort of diversion to the eyes which arrive too early for the show, but which is rolled up and forgotten as soon as living actors appear and real action begins.

John Henry Newman bewailed the Church of England because the religion of its devotees did not seem to make any difference. They did not do anything they would not have done nor refrain from doing what they would have done because of their religious convictions: an unworldly creed jauntily and easily associated with the most worldly practice. And it must be confessed that whatever allegiance many moderns give to their religion does not seem to make very much difference. It *may* add one more meeting to their weekly schedule; it almost never adds two. It may increase the family budget by a subscription to the church treasury; it seldom exercises any greater control over their wealth. In any large degree the profession of religion makes no rearrangement in the lives and loves of its adherents. When they are harassed by pain,

confused by ignorance, oppressed with boredom, threatened with defeat, confronted by the necessity of industrial and political and domestic choice, they resort to the same expedients and sometimes indulge in the same explosions as those who are frankly irreligious.

In a word, religion has lost its vitality as far as too large a section of our population is concerned. It does not appeal to those who are without, and has ceased to control in any significant way those who are within the church. They do not take it into their reckoning when they are making steel or "making whoopee." It does not inspire their arts, transform their industries, illumine their homes. It arouses no personal hungers and awakens no social compunctions. Whether they look at it from afar or keep it in the house, it is as a mummy with an interesting history, but from whose lips no more wisdom shall be heard and by whose hands no more work shall be done. The pious may still venerate it, the superstitious may even burn incense to it in the hope that healing may come from it, but intelligent and busy people must go on about their business, letting the dead past bury its dead.

The diagnosis of such a condition is by no means simple. Many surveys have been made and many books written in an effort to discover and declare the pathology of and panacea for religion's distressing plight. Recognizing that there are many factors which have entered into the situation, the writer is convinced that one great reason for the slight hold which religion has upon the imagination and loyalty of many is that religion's values have been obscured by the terminology of its advocates and teachers. There are many of us who have found in Christianity everything which the multitude is seeking elsewhere—health and freedom, peace and joy, certitude and light, power and life. We are sure that these blessings have come to us not because of our peculiar social situation or our individual inheritance, but because of our relationship to One whose words and whose life have revealed to us the realities of religion.

"Whoso has felt the spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound him, nor doubt, nor deny—
Yea, with one voice, oh world, though thou deniest,
Stand on that side, for on this side am I."[1]

If, therefore, the multitudes have turned away from religion, it is not because there is nothing in it for live, intelligent, eager men and women, but because our teaching and preaching have discredited it.

Pittsburgh windows, unless washed with frequent regularity, distort or shut out entirely the vision of the outside world. The soot of bituminous chimneys and the chemicals emitted by countless factory furnaces are devastatingly successful in guaranteeing such an unhappy result. Every housewife knows that! We do not seem to be equally aware that our words need washing too. The social atmosphere, laden with the soot of erroneous thinking and with the corrosive chemicals emitted from minds where fires of passion play about the ores of prejudice, soon incrusts even our great words with such a heavy deposit that men no longer see reality when they attempt to look through them. The vision of truth has been lost in the very words by which we attempt to reveal truth. Those words no longer mean to our audiences what they ought to mean, but when uttered awaken ideas which are alien to the reality of which they ought to be the sign. Hence truth has become a lie, our ideals illusion, our goodness evil. The degeneration of the phrases which we are compelled to use has made people who hear us think of the low when we have meant the high, of the little when we have meant the great, of gutters when we have been thinking of gardens, of hell when we have had visions of heaven. Our theology has seemed to them abstract nonsense; our ethics the relic of "old far-off unhappy things and battles long ago." They detect in our utterances little which seems intelligent or useful to souls in the making.

Our first task is the redemption of the language of religion

[1] F. W. H. Meyer, "St. Paul."

in order that it may become not the obscuration, but the revelation of the glories which religion offers to those who seek integrity in the intellectual life, richness in the emotional life, disciplined strength in the volitional life.

It is proposed, therefore, in this simple monograph to take some of the great words of religion which have been spoiled by unhappy associations, indicate clearly the spoliation which has actually taken place, and suggest some of the nobler meanings which by exposition and reiteration we must help our hearers to link with the terms which by reason of long usage are likely to form the abiding language of religion. There will be nothing startling about these pages, save the surprise which comes when one is brought face to face with facts at which he has merely squinted because he has taken them for granted in his hurry to get done what can be achieved only when one ceases taking anything for granted. Whether teachers or preachers, we have all been assuming too much about the state of mind of the people whom we are eager to help. We have been aware that there are many primitive and childlike notions in mental circulation, but we have too readily supposed, whenever we use a word, that our hearers will recognize and accept the nobler meanings which we attach to it.

For this reason it has seemed to the author that there is a place for a book like this which will state somewhat bluntly the ideas which actually arise in the public mind in connection with some of our great religious words, and which will seek to make clear the ideas with which patient teaching must reinvest these words if they are to become windows through which the charm and power of religion may be seen by all who will look in our direction. The only fitness which the author claims for so significant a task is a rather wide experience in pastorates which in back-country circuits, county-seat towns, university centers, and in great cities have brought him into close contacts with the minds of all classes of the American people and made him feel keenly the need for such a work as the book undertakes. What he writes here concerning prevail-

ing misconceptions of religion is a transcript of life. However ineffectively stated, it represents a condition with which we must reckon. How we shall redeem it is not a question for one man alone to answer. How one man has tried, is herein revealed. Perhaps the revelation will help some teacher or preacher who loves God and his fellow men, who toils and sings,

"If one soul from Anwoth
Meet me at God's right hand,
My heaven will be two heavens
In Emmanuel's land."

CHAPTER II

GOD IN THE WORLD TO-DAY

I

After an address upon religion made before the Hungry Club Forum recently, by a distinguished professor of a great American university, one of the hearers asked the speaker if he believed such an experience is possible now as is described in Genesis where it says, "And Enoch walked with God." The professor answered with just one word, "Certainly," and a look of content settled upon the questioner's face. But those of us who were acquainted with the views of both questioner and questioned knew that behind this apparent agreement was a violent contradiction. To the questioner God is a wholly other Being with whom one can keep company as one keeps company with an earthly friend. But to the questioned God is simply a social product, a being who exists only in the thought of those who think he exists, a mere personification of the common good will as Uncle Sam is the personification of the spirit which makes the United States of America. When the lecturer said he believed man could walk with God, he simply meant that man could identify himself with universal good will. The lecturer was honest when he answered that question affirmatively, but the hearer never caught his idea, because the word "God" carried a meaning to his mind quite other than it had when it left the lips of the speaker. As the result of their different experiences each had associated with the sound "God" an entirely unique cluster of ideas, so that when they said the *same* thing they meant a *different* thing. Language thus became an instrument not of precision and communication, but of mystification and confusion. The repetition of a word was but the obfuscation of an idea.

That sort of thing is going on all the time. We forget that words have no absolute meaning which they inevitably impart to the mind. They are not even carts which we can load up with our own meanings and shove down the runways of speech in the assurance that they will arrive in the minds of the listener bearing the same freight with which they started. What actually happens is that at the doorway of another's life they strike a tipple which dumps off the load with which they started, after which the other man's experience proceeds to load up the empty carrier with materials collected through years of life and piled up on the inside of his own door. Many of the materials may be the same as those with which the cart was launched on its journey from our mind to his, for we may have shared the same material-making experience. But many of them will be different. Sometimes the difference is so great that the cart when it at last arrives on the inside, purporting to have come with samples from our minds, carries little hint of what actually is there.

This is, of course, a commonplace to anyone who knows the genealogy of words and the psychology of ideas, but it is too often forgotten by teachers of religion. We use words without being at pains to explain what we mean by them, and the result is that those who listen to us attach their own meanings. We have not given them anything out of our experience; we have only awakened some memory of their own experience. Sometimes that memory is so unhappy or so erroneous that our word becomes a source of positive mischief. A lad in one Sunday school, who often heard the word "God" used, volunteered the information to a friend that "God is a big fellow who, if you say a few words to him when you go to bed, will not hurt you while you're asleep." Think of the havoc wrought in that child's moral life when he hears the preacher exalt God as one deserving all honor and reverence. God to him means a divine bully hovering about to pounce on all who do not make obeisance to him. The preacher seems, therefore, to be exalting as the ideal that which, if adopted by the boy, will

make him an insufferable member of society. If he decides (which we hope he will) to be like God, he will start out to bully the world (which we hope he will not).

II

Of course few in any community actually think of such a monstrosity, when they hear the word "God," but if a survey could be made of all the notions which arise in the average congregation when we repeat the sacred name, the results would be amazing and, I am afraid, disconcerting. I am venturing to set down here in black and white some of the conceptions I have encountered among all classes of people in my own ministry. I think it will do us good to come face to face with the stark reality of these confusions which exist all about us. This is a faithful record. The language is dressed up a bit, but the content is taken directly from the lips and life of people I have known. Probably every one of these notions, I will not call them ideas, exists in completeness or in modification in any considerable group of people assembled anywhere in the name of religion.

God is a *divine magician* who, if properly approached, works wonders for his favorites, brings rain or drives it away, controls the stock market, outwits their competitors, secures their prosperity and peace apart from all meteorological, economic, social, or political law.

God is a *divine metaphysician,* chiefly concerned that people should entertain correct opinions about the nature of the Trinity, the method of inspiration, the so-called plan of the ages; and having no patience with faulty notions which he classifies as heresy.

God is a *divine magistrate* sitting in judgment upon people's acts; ordering punishment with little respect to their limitations, their physical abnormalities, their psychic perversions; demanding an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth; and heaping up such grave indictments upon us all that only a divine substitute can keep us out of the prison of eternal torture.

God is the *Lord of the Inquisition,* prying into minute details of life to see if anywhere we have violated some arbitrary law which has been laid down, not because it is an inescapable condition of well being in such a universe as this, but because we need to be reminded of divine authority and taught to keep our places.

God is the *Omnipresent Policeman,* not bothering good folks very much, but keeping traffic moving along congested highways of the universe; making occasional raids in the shape of disease or calamity upon evil men and women; not beyond accepting the bribe of a "Hail Mary" or a generous donation to some college or hospital.

God is a *divine War Lord* who may be summoned to the battlefield to help men slaughter their fellow men and to the laboratory to assist in the concoction of deadly gases for the smothering of civilian populations. He appeared as the Christ in Khaki to supply divine nerve to soldiers whose human nerves shrank from plunging bayonets into the viscera of other men whose only crime was that they answered their country's call.

God is an *egotistic Sovereign* who is very jealous of honors paid him and who is very insistent that men shall gather in dedicated places and chant his praises in selected phrases.

God is the *Divine Patriarch,* kindly, benevolent, patient, laughing inwardly at our foibles and stretching out a mighty hand to save us from our worst blunders; but letting us learn by experience what cannot be taught us directly, and by and by summoning us to ancestral abodes where there shall be neither danger nor duty, but only endless delight.

God is a *divine Physician* who heals some diseases, but either fails or does not try with others; a valuable member of the staff at Glory Barns and Angelus Temples, but somehow a bit shy of orthodox churches.

God is a *Vague Remoteness* whom some men believe in, but whom nobody can actually lay hands upon. There seem to be faint traces of strange footsteps here and there, but the trail is never hot and all the methods of scientific research have failed to lead to his hiding place. Clouds and darkness are round about him.

God is the *Great Uncertainty*. He does touch the lives of men and influence the course of history. But his actions are absolutely unpredictable. You can never tell whom he will exalt and whom cast down.

God is the *Transcendental Other*. He is; and everything must reckon with him. Nothing can stand against him. But neither can anything approach him, nor imitate him nor obey him. Men cannot move toward him; only he can move toward man. Those whom he elects to approach will know him. Those whom he ignores are as good as damned. Between creation and its Creator there is an abyss which only he can span. Only when he throws down the bridge is there any possibility of crossing.

What a sorry array of ideas! God!—that ought to be the most wondrous word in the language, a word which should cluster about itself everything that is beautiful and true and good, fill the mind with the noblest thoughts, make the heart throb with most sanctifying emotions, energize the will with the most exalted moral ideals; a word that should suggest not fear, but confidence, not uncertainty, but assurance; not remoteness, but nearness—and yet it cannot be spoken anywhere without conjuring up the poor distorted pictures we have just passed in hurried review. It is no wonder that those who still think of God in such terms should steadily drift to the crowd, whom Browning describes in trenchant lines,

> "Whose life laughs through and spits at their creed,
> Who maintain Thee in word and defy Thee in deed."

Nor is it surprising that a multitude, imagining when they hear us talk about God that we mean such a being, should shrug their shoulders and turn away to more alluring and rational themes and dedications.

III

Because of these caricatures, which seem to be inevitably associated with the word, some have ceased to use it altogether. They have chosen to invent other terms which have not been

spoiled by misuse. All that they revere was in existence long before the English word "God" came to the lips of men. At most the word cannot be more than a thousand years old. Men got along without it for centuries. The Latin said, "Deus," the Greek "Theos," the Hebrew "Jahweh." Why can we not invent a term or a phrase which will have the advantage of being coined for a specific purpose and unspoiled by such intolerable associations as have marred the familiar name? So they speak of the "Great All," the "Spiritual Universe," "Ultimate Reality," "First Cause," "Life Force." With some this new phraseology has become a conviction. They will not say "God" because it arouses feelings and suggests ideas which are ungodlike, and it, therefore, is quite the same thing as telling a lie. It is bearing false witness against our divine Neighbor. They are not (as is sometimes hastily assumed) deniers or disbelievers whose teeth are chattering so violently with the cosmic chill that they cannot utter a word with any religious warmth in it. They are merely lovers of truth who refuse to dishonor, by a name which common usage has spoiled, the One on whom all their hopes rely and toward whom their faces are set with reverence and devotion.

IV

To some of us this course does not seem to be the wiser. New words cannot be invented every time an old word has been tarnished with error. Science with all its exactitude uses the word "nature," though that term carries an altogether different content than it did even a hundred years ago and than it does to millions who read it now. It is sometimes easier to take a word already in circulation, redeem it from its fallen estate, and invest it with true meanings than to coin a new word and get it into circulation. That is especially true in religion, for religion is not an affair of ideas only, but of emotions; and the emotional content of a word cannot be fixed over night. It is a cargo acquired through generations of human experiences. "Spiritual Universe" may much more exactly define

what we mean by "God," but it does not come within an appreciable proximity to the degree of warmth which the more familiar word awakens in spite of all the errors connected with it. It would take years and years to invest the new word with the emotive power which our human situation demands, and by the time such an investment was accomplished the race would probably discover that the new phrase had not only become badly tarnished by fresh error, but that it had ceased to be an adequate symbol of the most recent discoveries made. It seems better, therefore, to bring the old terms abreast of our richest experiences, continually purging them of accumulating dross and sanctifying them for a place in our Holy of holies. That does not mean a vain endeavor to do what Mr. Lippmann describes when he speaks of the hopelessness of attempting "to reconstruct an enduring orthodoxy." We have no penchant for finality nor do we imagine that any number of things we may say about God will endow our conception with indisputable authority over the minds of the whole multitude. But it is our strong conviction that a patient and courageous investiture of the sacred name with explicit conceptions demanded by our enlarging view of the universe and our evolving moral consciousness will give religion a new and powerful appeal to the intelligence and conscience of our time. And because of that conviction we venture here to suggest some principles which such an investiture must embody. We are not attempting to restate a theology. But we do emphasize certain ideas of God which are notoriously absent from the language of many who teach religion and from the minds of those who hear such teaching or refuse to hear it because they are not able to stomach it.

1. *Immensity.* God has lost his hold upon the imagination and faith of men because he has been presented in finite terms. When the newspapers a few years ago carried the story of astronomy's dazzling computations of the size of the universe, a Christian layman met me on the street, literally a-tremble from head to foot. His God wasn't big enough to manage such

vastness and his faith was reeling like a punch-drunk pugilist in the arena where a few hours before he had walked with complete assurance. Unless God is conceived as competent for the new universe, religion will not only cease to attract those who are looking for something to help them master the universe, but it will witness a steady dwindling away of those who have been marching to the beat of its drum.

A God incommensurate with the universe is a fading Deity. Such have much teaching and preaching made him to be. Only a few weeks ago a Christian minister whose name is a household word in America, in an editorial printed in a religious journal of very wide circulation, said: "If God is personal he must have a form. I like to think of him as a young man with a fresh, smiling face." Well, that is better than the picture of him as an old man whose bearded and frowning visage bears witness to a heavy and disappointed life. But it is all too small, too finite. The essence of personality is not form, but rationality and emotion and volition and, in order to retain all there is of value in the adjective personal, it is not necessary to think of God either as an old man or a young man. He is not man, but God, not finite, but infinite, not a localized form, but omnipresence. He is the totality of Reality. The stars are in him. The sky is in him. The lillies of the field and the loftiness of the Alps are in him. You and I are in him. All are included in the range of his life. All do not equally represent him any more than your little finger or the last drop of blood which just left your heart represents you equally with the noblest thought or holiest emotions of the sanctuary hour. When I touch your hand and lay my finger on your pulse I am touching you, but you are a great deal more than that. You are the wisdom and purpose and love which your friends admire and your family loves. So when I touch the earth or sweep the heavens with the telescope I am in contact with God, yet God is infinitely more than that. What your body is to you, that, after a fashion, the universe of nature is to God. It is related to him, a more of his self-expression.

He is in all and through all and yet he is more than all. We must therefore push back the walls of our definition of God so far that though we mount the wings of light and travel to the far edge of the Milky Way and sit down a hundred thousand trillion miles from here, we shall still be within the area of the life of God. God must become the source of all the whirling electrons in space and of their infinite combinations, as well as of all that is best in human experience, or he cannot long be an object of trust and love.

The weakness of much of our presentation of him is that it has failed to do this. We have made of God only one object among a multitude of other objects. Scientifically minded folks have taken us at our word and have said: "Good; we know these other objects, their history and their behavior. Now let us see if there is evidence that your Object is anywhere about. We see none. Things are what they are and do what they do because of what they are, not because of any external compulsion and interference from an Object whom you describe as God. Therefore we deny that he is."

Once you separate God from the universe and make of him a stage manager pulling strings here and there, lowering and lifting curtains, you land in agnosticism, if not in atheism, for truly no such being has ever been discovered. But think of God as the totality of reality who includes in himself not only the regularities of nature but the consciousness of man, with all its products in science, literature, philosophy, art, ethics, and religion, and God does not become an abstraction or a being standing outside the realm of the known, but One who is present in the seen and of whom we have real experience and therefore knowledge. That is not what Thomas Hardy calls "a Pantheistic utterance in a Monotheistic falsetto." *Pantheism* identifies God with nature. *I* am saying that nature is *in* God and that we are *in* God—as a *part* of his self-expression *under limitations of his own choosing.* But nature and we do not exhaust God. He is not merely one of the objects in the all. He is not merely coterminous with all. All are *in* Him

whose infinite abundance is the inexhaustible source of all that was, is, or shall be.

Many problems, of course, are raised by such a conception—some of which are discussed at greater lengths by greater minds and some of which are to human ken insoluble. But what is preserved here is that commensurateness which alone can keep God vital to the thinking and life of this generation. My objection to the idea of God as presented by Professor Whitehead and popularly expounded by Professor Wieman, namely, as a principle of concretion operating upon independent energies or materials, is that it fails, as does the picture of the "young man with fresh, smiling face," to give us a notion equal to the tasks of Lordship over cosmic or human history. It leaves us with a God who is merely one element in our environment. What about all the other energies and tendencies with which we are surrounded? Are they merely neutrals? Or are they opponents? If so, shall we call this discreetness and anarchy "devil," as we have called the principle of concretion "God"? What basis is there for hope and trust in such a pluralistic universe? Of course, if that is finally demonstrated to be the character of the universe, we shall have to make the best of it and with Mr. Russell build our souls "upon the foundation of unyielding despair," or, with a pluralistic friend of mine, say: "Here is a God fighting desperately. He may not win, but I'd rather die fighting for him than to live under any other regime." What I am saying is, in the absence of contrary proof and in the presence of man's passion for unity and the clamor of his heart for assurance that life is more than "a tale of sound and fury signifying nothing," the conception of God which makes him commensurate with the universe and competent for its mastery is more likely to command the attention and respect of an astronomically minded generation than one which makes him less than the universe and only one finite factor, what Professor James called "one of the eaches," in its life. The cry of men like Professor Barnes for a cosmic God has something behind it which we dare not ignore. Noth-

ing less has long supported a dynamic religion in the past, and nothing less can vitalize the religious consciousness of our time.

2. But we need to beware lest a cosmic God becomes merely an infinite mechanism. There must be linked with the "vastness that is God" rationality. Men are not likely to sing hymns to "Creative Energy." The intelligence within will never bow the knee to something less than intelligence without. They may study it and even be afraid of it, but they cannot worship it. Rationality is *there*. The universe is intelligible. Science cannot deny that without repudiating itself. The whole realm which we describe as nature, acting according to laws which are comprehended only by mathematical genius, seems inexplicable save on a mental basis. Whatever is out there behaves according to the intricate formulas which our highest intelligence obeys. It is *en rapport* with mind. And we must not forget that *we* are a part of the universe. We are not aliens in the universe, but organic to it. He who would appraise the cosmos must take us in account. It reveals its character in us, quite as much as in the whirl of planetary systems and the movement of light. And we are rational—at least sometimes. The ascription of rationality in our preaching and teaching about God is therefore no mere gratuity. It is a recognition of what must be the character of Him who embraces all within the scope of his own life. And it is the subject of a *fresh* and imperious demand by a generation which pays large tributes and gives costly hostages to intelligence. There simply will be no hearing let alone credence for the utterance which attempts to link with God the irrationalities which have characterized much which has been said in our Sunday schools and our pulpits. The absurdities involved in the description of him as manageable magician, or punctilious metaphysician, or blunt magistrate, or prying inquisitor, or purchasable policeman, or good-natured patriarch, or ceremony-loving sovereign, with all the variations which such fundamental themes make possible, must be put away from among us frankly and completely. A

generation which is beginning to be reasonable about some of its own most hoary follies is not going to be much interested in the unreasonable God of High-Church legerdemain or in the sharp-witted deity of Low-Church casuistry. It can be won to reverence for One whose "thoughts are higher than your thoughts" and whose dealings with his universe are characterized by large-mindedness and understanding.

3. We must put character into our conception of God. A thoughtful view of the universe demands it. As Rufus Jones has pointed out, the universe produces not only potash and pig-iron, but in its completed expressions beauty, love, truth, dedications, goodness. How could they come *out* if they were not already *in?* Recalling what was said in an earlier paragraph about man's being not alien, but organic to the universe, what is in man, the part, must be evidence to the character of the whole. Of course the old question of evil bobs up here, for, alas! if man is a clue to something inherent in the whole, we have to face the presence of evil in his life and therefore in the life of the whole. But it seems to some of us easier to account for the presence of evil in a good universe than for the coming of good into an evil or even neutral universe. It is significant that a scientist like Eddington can say, "If I were to try to put into words the essential truth revealed in the mystic experience, it would be that our minds are not apart from the world; and the feelings that we have of gladness and melancholy and our yet deeper feelings are not of ourselves alone, but are glimpses of a reality transcending the narrow limits of our particular consciousness—that the harmony and beauty of the face of nature is at root one with the gladness that transfigures the face of man,"[1] and can indicate in later paragraphs his trust that our values are some reflection, if only pale, of those of the Absolute Valuer.

Stronger even than philosophic argument is the demand of the moral consciousness for a good God. The worst calamity

[1] *Nature of the Physical World,* p. 321, The Macmillan Company, publishers. Reprinted by permission.

that has befallen the word "God" is that we have made it stand for tempers and passions which we would condemn in any normal citizen of the twentieth century. Caprice and pique and pride and vanity and vengefulness and unconcern for human life—all of these have again and again been proclaimed as divine traits. To be sure, we have never used those terms in our talk about him, but we have described him and his demands upon us and his purposes for the future in euphemistic language which nevertheless portrayed a God who is less than good. A Jewish boy, when told the story of the punishment of Lot's wife for having looked back when fleeing from the burning city, remonstrated in her behalf: "Sure, anybody would want to see a fire." That little boy was diviner than the God proclaimed in many churches. *He* at least took account of human frailty. And a universe which can produce him and a million others who have loved mercy, dealt justly, and walked humbly, and which finally crowned its creative self-expression with Jesus of Nazareth is not adequately described in the teaching and preaching which finds its theology and its ethics in the wars of Canaan, the plagues of Egypt, the dripping altars of Jerusalem, the smoking spoils of Gehenna, the holocausts of sundry apocalypses. Nothing but a Christlike universe could yield at last a Christ, and until Christian pulpits and desks become genuinely Christian they are the rostrums of false prophets who belie and betray the cause to which their lives are pledged! The proclamation of a Christlike God is certain to have a disintegrating effect upon many of our accepted practices in politics and industry as well as in the home and the church, but it will at least not alienate from, but win to religion those finer spirits whose ethical enthusiasm is one of the richest treasures of the race; and while rebuking baser souls will saturate that rebuke with the redemptive hope of mercy and forgiveness.

4. And, finally, we must put more richness into our conception of God. In a recent magazine article on "One God or Many," Mr. Huxley expresses the opinion that the race will

veer again to polytheism because the God of monotheism has become too austere and narrow to answer the longings and fulfill the demands of a human nature reeking with interests and aptitudes. The critic has laid a finger upon a weak spot in our presentations of God. We have too often made of him only an enlarged and very stern Puritan Father. He has therefore become incapable of being the God of our arts and our sciences, our loves as well as our labors, our holidays as well as our days in the mill and in the store. Human nature has come to a new self-appraisal, to a new appreciation of whatever is genuinely human. It refuses to believe that the romantic love of one man for one woman, of the artist for his brush, of the musician for his instrument, and of the city-exile for the open field and sky, are either devil-inspirations or mere accidents. In everything lovely it wants to believe that there is a reflection of reality, and its God must be one whose benediction enriches every life-making human activity. Surely, we do not need to go further than Jesus for encouragement to answer that demand. Did he not contribute to the joys of the wedding feast and bend over the lily and wait out the midnight stars and sit among the Rotarians as well as the learned doctors of his day? Can we present a Christlike God unless we give to men One whose richness of life can be sponsor and sustainer of all that the worship of any worthy Deity ever fostered, and who at the same time brings that all within a divine unity which leaves no loose ends anywhere as it binds all values into one eternal hierarchy of bliss?

CHAPTER III

JESUS THE REVEALER

I

One of the greatest seers of this generation, Dr. Rufus M. Jones, said the other day, "After all the age-long discussions of the nature of Christ and all the formulations of doctrine about him, . . . there is still need of a simpler, more intimate, less controversial interpretation of this supreme Revealer of God and man."[1]

One does not get very far in the attempt to teach the Christian religion without finding himself confronted with the necessity of some interpretation. If the word and person of Christ are not the central facts of religion for a man, he may well doubt whether he has ever guessed what Christianity is about. Christianity is Christ. Leave him out and what remains is a corpse, whence the spirit and life have fled, fit only for burial. A Christless Christianity is an arid paradox. The Christianity of Christ is a psalm whose cadences are suffused with the personality and redemptive power which make it unique among all the religions of the world.

But the recognition of that fact among his messengers is not sufficient to revitalize his religion in our time. For the word "Christ" has been so conceived and so uttered as to be only an irritant to those who are trying to be intelligent in their religious attitudes. Sometimes it has been made to stand for that which a trained and alert moral judgment must flatly repudiate; sometimes it has been abstract and vague and without value. In the last chapter was set down a list of ideas which I had found associated with the name of God among typical parishes in America. Such a list brings vividly to mind the

[1] Reprinted by permission.

confusions and perversions which exist in the minds of folk in whom we are trying to recreate a living religion. Read in the public congregation, it has proven to be one of the most effective devices for bringing clearly and sharply to the attention the pathetic plight which confronts us as we seek to reveal the truth and power that actually are to be found in him.

We are here presented with a confusing picture. But it is not a cubist monstrosity. It is a photograph. It could be duplicated in part or in whole in almost every Protestant congregation in America had we a camera sensitive enough to capture the mental content of the people gathered on a Sunday morning. You will be horrified by this list, but I beg of you read on to the end of the chapter.

Christ is another name for Jesus, a carpenter's son who turned aside from his parental trade and became a wandering teacher; who seems to have made an impression upon the country folk in Galilee, but who ran afoul of the city folk in Jerusalem and perished in the resulting mêlée; a dim, shadowy figure who appeared on the stage of history for a brief time and then disappeared, leaving behind him not enough solid achievement to furnish a decent obituary notice.

Christ is an oratorical term by which men mean the spirit of Jesus; a synthesis of the *demeanors* which he exhibited in his dealings with the men of his day and of the *idealizations* which our human habit of legend-making has unconsciously woven about his name; an emotive word to which men resort, when bankrupt of ideas, to summon romantic moods and escape the necessity of clear thinking about their painful problems.

Christ is a theological enigma with which men busy themselves when they are unwilling to study the historical Jesus and to apply the results of that study to their domestic and political and industrial and international life; often made the test of orthodoxy by those whose private lives will not bear scrutiny and whose acquisition and use of wealth and power are in flat contradiction to all that the Jesus of history lived and died for.

Christ is the second member of the supernatural society called the Trinity; one of the three Persons in the Godhead which is

nevertheless not one but three; distinct from the Father and the Holy Spirit and yet one with them; a different being who took up his abode in human flesh and yet remained a part of God in heaven; and who by and by went back to heaven taking with him into the Godhead, which he temporarily left, the bodily form of Jesus, and is now, though at one with God, seated on a throne beside God.

Christ is the divine actor, who without having lost his divinity and without having actually assumed the limitations of humanity, nevertheless played on the Palestinian stage the rôle of a human being, seeming to suffer and to be tempted and to be perplexed and to die without ever at any time actually sharing the feelings of those of us who are in the fight with disease and with the often disheartening odds which confront our human attempt to make life clean and effective and immortal; and he did all this in order to raise before us an ideal.

Christ is the perfect human example who was supernaturally aided in meeting all the difficulties which beset a life in an imperfect human society, and so was able to live life as it ought to be and to stimulate us with a pattern which is within our reach because the supernatural aid which was his may be ours; whatever Christ was we may be.

Christ was the divine victim who took human form that he might draw upon himself the punishment due us because of the sin of Adam and of our own sins resulting from perverted wills or invincible ignorance; whose pains and death were the infliction of a just God who could not forgive the world's sin until somebody had borne a penalty sufficiently great to make it possible to forgive sin without cheapening it. And because no sinner could do any more than pay the penalty of his own sin, expiation had to be made by someone who had never sinned, and so the divine Son had to submit himself to the judicial strokes of the divine Father. "There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin." God was on the throne inflicting punishment and yet there is one God and not two.

Christ is the divine solicitor at the court of heaven. God is on the throne, awful, just, magisterial, certain to exact the last farthing from us unless Christ intercedes in our behalf; apt

to forget us unless Christ calls attention to us; unmoved by our human petitions unless those petitions are taken up and revoiced by Christ. God is stern but Christ loves us, and when he shows his wounded hands and feet, the Father's heart is touched by his Son's sufferings and he relents. Both Judge and Intercessor are a God.

Christ is the head of a hierarchy, a divine churchman who gave the church a creed to control its thinking, bishops to guide its policies, sacraments and ritual which are the infallible machinery of human regeneration. He is largely influenced in the distribution of his bounties by consulting the roll of church membership.

Christ is a magic name which, if appended to prayers, guarantees a hearing and an answer.

Christ is a divine warrier who, after having given the generations of men an opportunity to accept his rule, is going to descend from heaven at the head of celestial armies to take flaming vengeance on his enemies and ride to his throne of power through rivers of blood.

What a list! But there is not a manufactured emphasis anywhere in it. It has all come out of the minds of men and women, the kind of men and women whose minds must be changed if Christianity is to play a vital part either in their own lives or in the lives of those who think that that is what we mean when we present Christ to the world. Have these paragraphs irritated and depressed you? They have me. It hurt me to write them down. Alas that after twenty centuries and in a generation which has mastered earth and sea and air, annihilated time and distance, taken the dizzy spaces of a far-flung universe to its heart, anybody should think such things when he hears the word "Christ" in conversation or in public speech! Here and there, to be sure, in that depressing catalogue are elements of truth, but so distorted and out of balance that even that truth has become error.

II

In the presence of such a situation no easy task is ours. But we must at least assume it and do our best at it as with patience and persistence we seek to rescue the word from its perversions and to set Him for whom the word stands in the clear light of truth, that he may be no longer an object of wrangling and mystification and perplexity, but a Person to be loved and revered and trusted and followed to the very limit, even though such discipleship cost one friends and prosperity and life itself.

1. In order to clarify our conception of Christ, it is necessary to begin where we left off in the last chapter, with a recognition of God, not as a localized, finite Being, sitting on a throne somewhere amid the whirl of an alien and hostile or even neutral universe but as the totality of Reality, before all as the eternal source of its temporal existence, in all as its animating and unifying principle, above all and beyond all in the inexhaustible resources of his infinite Being.

2. In a very real sense God is incarnate, finds a body, an instrument of self-expression in nature. When I was in England, I traveled a day's journey out of my course just to visit Tintern Abbey in the Valley of the Wye, and to sit on the hillside overlooking the beautiful, sculptured relics of a romantic past and, with my Wordsworth in hand, read again those memorable lines in which the poet-laureate and priest of nature sums up his assurance of the presence of God.

> "And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

But not everything in nature makes us think of God. Earthquakes and volcanoes and tornadoes and unobtrusive but deadly germs add chapters to the story of the universe which compel us to admit that this body of God must give him many aches and pains and represent a serious limitation to his self-expression.

In man something higher appears—individuality, moral consciousness, religious aspiration. "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason; how infinite in faculty; in form and moving how express and admirable; in action how like an angel; in apprehension how like God!" But, of course, *that* is man at his *best*. There is much in run-of-mine humanity that seems a frustration of the Universal Spirit. Sometimes men make us think of the devil. No one can contemplate that horrible picture in Akron of the frenzied husband standing over the prostrate form of the wife whose eyes he had gouged out, shouting to her, "I told you I would put out your beautiful eyes," or of many similar crimes with which our newspapers have made us all too familiar, without being sure that the spirit which gave the world a Lincoln has suffered in many other segments of humanity almost complete defeat in its effort at expression. And even man at his best seems to be an incomplete, unfinished or frustrate expression of the Thought Behind. Call the roll of heroes and saints, of men of character and genius, and even while we praise them we are aware of flaws, conscious that some immensity, some glory, of which our minds have intimations, did not get through. And none is more aware than these men and women themselves. Lamb's description of Coleridge as "an archangel—slightly damaged" would be accepted by the best of them only as exaggerated eulogy.

3. Once, however, upon earth there walked a Man whose words and deeds, whose spirit and achievements were such that the men who knew him best loved him most, and not only loved him but paid him the reverence which in their hearts they reserved for God alone. And through all the centuries

of increasing intellectual and moral discernment, when the moral and spiritual consciousness of the race has risen to higher and higher levels, men still turn back to Jesus of Nazareth and still love him and pay to him the reverence which they too reserve for God. They do not merely *say* with Richard Roberts, "When the last dreadnought has been scrapped and sold for old iron, when power is no more than a faded and shabby memory, when the last plutocrat is dead and forgotten, and grass is growing in the streets of now proud cities, the chiefest glory of this race of man will be that there once lived on this earth a peasant named Jesus, who was born in a cave and died on a cross,"[2] but they go on to *feel* with Charles Lamb that if Jesus were to come into the room, they should want to kneel.

Now, what does all this mean? Well, this at least: that God who elsewhere finds a *measure* of self-expression and a partial *revelation* of his nature, found in the man Jesus his supreme opportunity; that just because Jesus is the chief glory of the race he was for God a channel of self-expression such as was found nowhere else. All of the infinite that could enter finite form, all of divinity that could abide in humanity, all of the Eternal Spirit that could reveal itself in a human life, embodied itself in Jesus so that in Jesus was a true incarnation of God; not different from but immeasurably beyond God's incarnation in nature and in other men, as Jesus is immeasurably beyond nature and all other good men who have walked the earth; unique in that the distance between Jesus and all other men is such that while he is like us, he is so forever unlike us that we must describe him, as John did, as "the only begotten Son."

Men who care to wrestle with psychological and philosophical puzzles may go further in the attempt to frame theories as to the origin of the fitness of Jesus for this unparalleled revelation of God. They may raise all sorts of questions about the

[2] Reprinted by permission of the author.

union of human and divine natures in one person. But do we need to know anything more than this, namely, that the Eternal Reality, whom we call God, expressing himself in his creative activities in nature and in man, did in Jesus obviously and specifically "create a center into which his Absoluteness poured its own being"? So that while in nature and man we have adumbrations, in Jesus we have a full revelation of the character of God. Such a full revelation we call the Christ. Or, reversing it, what of God got through in Jesus is the Christ.

Not all of the Eternal is expressed in Jesus. That is what the old history attempted to safeguard in its doctrine of the Trinity. The Father and the Holy Spirit were, so to speak, located outside of Jesus, representing different hypostases of the one God.

Christ, therefore, becomes not a different God but what of God is seen in Jesus. He is not all of God, but he is all of God capable of self-expression on the human plane, all of God we can understand and appropriate. This is all made very concrete in Sadhu Sundar Singh's quaint account of his vision: "When I entered heaven for the first time I looked all around me and asked, 'Where is God?' and they answered and said unto me, 'God is seen here as little as on earth, for God is infinite. But Christ is here; he is the image of the Invisible God, and only in him can anyone see God, either here or upon earth."[3] In Jesus Christ, the Eternal Reality, the Everlasting Father, concentrated as much of himself as our human nature could bear and our human vision endure. Looking at him, we do see God. Through him we understand God as far as the finite can understand the infinite. He is the one Word which makes God intelligible to us.

III

What does Christ tell us about God?

1. That he is an atoning God. Not in the sense that he sent

[3] *The Gospel of Sadhu Sundar Singh.* Reprinted by permission of The Oxford Press.

someone else to take the lightning of divine wrath into his bosom, but that he himself, moving toward a world in his complete self-revelation, in order that by that revelation he might lift man to himself, is undaunted by the price he must pay. Self-revelation is costly. Ask Dante and Milton and Beethoven and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. *What it cost the Timeless Absolute to body himself forth in temporal form we may not even guess.* But he cared enough for us to *do that!* And he cared enough to submit to everything which a blind people could and would do to him. He *suffered for* our redemption. The reinterpretation of religion only re-emphasizes that! Our fullness comes at the price of his emptying; our healing at the price of his brokenness.

2. Christ is the assurance that he is an intercessory God; not pleading with God for men but pleading with men for God; pleading with them when they are not pleading for themselves; seeking to set in motion events that will awaken and arouse their sleeping consciences and lead them into fellowship with himself and into loyalty to the highest values. Many other religions have had at their center a priest on his knees before God, interceding for the people, seeking to avert divine wrath and persuade divine self-concern to bestow a blessing. But *Christ reveals to us God on his knees before the people,* entreating them to lay aside their selfishness and wrath and to accept the abundant life he is eager to give them. The most significant word Christ ever spoke is the thrilling word "Come." Many other teachers have said, "go," "do," "be." But Christ said "Come." "Come unto me and I will rest you." "Come unto me and have life." If Christ is God, we have a God with outstretched arms and a hospitable heart—a God who says:

> "Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee
> Save me, save only me?
> All which I took from thee, I did but take
> Not for thy harms
> But just that thou mightest seek it in my arms.

All which thy child's mistake
Fancied as lost, I have stored for thee at home,
Rise, clasp my hand and come!"[4]

3. Christ discloses to us a Warrior God, not at the head of vengeful armies but leading the hosts of redemptive love. He is not the God of the mailed fist but the God of the nail-pierced hands. He does not threaten; he entreats. His face is against evil because it is the foe of his children, and he will not be content until all the disintegrating, discordant, destructive forces of the universe are subdued and transformed by his integrating love into a glorious unity. But making war upon evil, he woos evil men. And if he must fight to win, he fights as Jesus did at Calvary with dying but undying love. He pits against all the forces arrayed in opposition his inevitable righteousness ruled by love.

A story told me in my earlier ministry epitomizes it all. Dying in his lonely cottage on the mountainside lay a wicked miner. Life had dealt hardly with him, warping his soul with evil associations in youth, denying him culture and comfort alike, taking from him by the death of his wife the only refining influence which ever deeply touched him, and at last abandoning him here to die friendless and alone. An elderly Christian woman in the neighborhood, hearing of his plight, resolved to see if something could not be done for him. She knew his reputation and her sensitive soul shrank at the thought of the reception which he would probably give her, but her Christ-anointed heart resolved to make the effort to minister to him and perhaps save him. Timidly she made her way toward his house, her heart beating almost as loudly as her knock upon the door. When there was no reply from within, she turned the knob and found it unlocked, pushed her way into the room, where lying in semi-darkness upon a disheveled bed she discerned a form. By this time the sleeping man was awake and, when his returning consciousness made him aware of what had

[4] Francis Thompson, "The Hound of Heaven."

happened, he let loose a terrible volley of obscene oaths as he bade her begone, that he might die as he had lived, alone. Overwhelmed with shame and mortification, the kindly but terrified woman beat a hasty retreat which did not stop until she was safely behind the doors of her own home down in the valley. What a hopeless situation! But as soon as her nerves recovered their equilibrium her heart again made itself heard. She could not let him die that way.

So the next morning she made her painful way up the hill again, this time with a basket full of dainties which her culinary skill had labored to provide. And when she reached the house she opened the door, set the basket inside and quietly withdrew, leaving behind only this tangible evidence that someone really cared.

To make a long story short, by and by love won. She finally was able to enter the house and clean up its physical dirt and transform it with her matronly touch. But, better still, she was able to enter the man's soul, to banish its moral dirt, to melt its hardness, to revive faith in mankind and in God. And when by and by the broken body released its hold upon the spirit, it was a spirit that had become again as a little child and that quietly but radiantly slipped away with the simplicity and the happiness of a lad returning to the home from which fate had stolen him away and whose peace and love he had entirely forgotten.

There it is all adumbrated—love's atonement as it suffered to break through the barrage of oaths and malediction, through the atmosphere of scorn and hate; love's intercession as it pleaded in words and deeds with the shriveled, warped soul to give it a chance to bring its redemptive ministries; love's warfare as it fought with the ignorance and lies and perversion and habits which imprisoned one made for a nobler estate.

That, only upon the scale of infinity, is the kind of a God seen in Jesus, a God whose redemptive sacrifice is forever revealed and enshrined in the thrilling name "Christ."

CHAPTER IV

CONTEMPORARY DIVINITY

I

In no aspect of its teaching does the church labor under greater handicaps than in its attempt to convey to men the values which are symbolized by the Holy Spirit. Much as one hates to pay tribute to controversy in religion, it must be confessed that the long controversy over Christ clarified the issues involved in his person and work. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit has not had even the benefit of controversy. There was never any adequate discussion of the problems involved nor any convincing appeal to experience. The term has had to make its own way about the world. Hence, like a stray child, it has wandered from one sheltering roof to another, from dusty theologians' desks to noisy camp-meeting platforms, picking up all the bad influences it has encountered in each halting place and acquiring few good ones. It seldom is made the theme of a sermon in conventional pulpits and less frequently still, of a satisfying sermon. In ten years I have listened to but one utterance which marched straight into the heart of the divine realities which live behind this term, and that came from the lips of a prized friend, strangely enough by the way, in a Modernist preaching mission carried on by Baptists, Methodists, and Disciples.

When there has been in the pulpit so little clear thinking based on a vivid personal experience, it is not to be wondered that there is much confusion in the pew. How great that confusion is will be discerned by anyone who will take a little time to inquire among his acquaintances what they think is meant by the phrase "Holy Spirit."

Below are the results of many inquiries and much listening

among the people with whom the author has had happy and otherwise intelligent fellowship in the task of his life.

The Holy Spirit is a sort of a spiritual ether through which a distant God radios his message to man. If the message does not go through, it is because the reception set is out of tune or out of order; the batteries have run low, the eliminator isn't working, the aerial is down. But the medium, the Holy Spirit, surrounds and envelops us and is always vibrating with messages for him who is prepared to receive them. The pronoun "it," and not "he," is quite sufficient to denote the reality.

The Holy Spirit is the spiritual atmosphere of the life of Jesus. Just as we speak of the spirit of John Wesley, or the spirit of Theodore Roosevelt, so we may speak of the spirit of Jesus; meaning the aggregate of his purposes, the character of his deeds, his way of looking at life, the moral fragrance which differentiates him not only from his contemporaries but from all the men of all the ages, his uniqueness of emphasis and of direction.

The Holy Spirit is the influence of the historic Jesus upon us; it is that subtle suggestion which follows all who are familiar enough with his story to have fallen in love with what he was. Just as men say that their father is the guiding star of their lives, or as women with grateful tears talk about mother, or as Republican orators summon people to open their hearts to the memory of Lincoln, or as Democrats assemble on Jackson Day to bathe their souls in recollections of "Old Hickory," so we of the Christian family and party are to keep our lives open to the memory of what Jesus said and did and was. In either case there is no actual contact of person with person, no inflow of energy from the outside. Imagination merely reassembles a historic character to chastise and correct and stimulate what we are.

The Holy Spirit is a third center of personality in the Godhead, whom the Father sends upon us to burn the slag out of our lives and invest us with his presence and power and attributes, making us holy, imparting to us special gifts, even the power to speak other languages than our own. In fact, one may never be sure that his heart has become the temple of the

Holy Spirit until he has in moments of ecstasy spoken a language unfamiliar to himself but certified and understood by some bystander. This descent of the third Person of the Trinity is at the behest of the first Person, who in turn is moved to action by the intercessory plea and suffering of the second Person. That he is a third Person is proven by the fact that a man may be a Christian, may belong to Christ, and yet not have the Holy Spirit. He acquires his relations to Christ by repentance and faith—a first blessing. He acquires the Holy Spirit only after conversion to Christ—a second blessing.

The Holy Spirit is a divine Agent, who by prayer may be induced to exert a reforming influence on unregenerate friends or to awaken an unspiritual community, while we keep the home fires burning or discuss the low state of religion in the community or enjoy a friendly game of bridge. Hugh Price Hughes, ardent evangelical of a previous generation, summarized and cauterized this view when he said that some people think of the Holy Spirit as "an errand boy for lazy Christians."

The Holy Spirit is merely the community spirit of the church. We speak about the spirit of Rotary and Kiwanis, the spirit of Masonry and of America, meaning the mutual aim and temper, the least common denominator which has emerged in the fellowship and work of the membership or the citizenship as the case may be; so the Holy Spirit is simply the temper and outlook which always develop when men and women who believe in Jesus unite to keep alive his story and to carry forward his program. It is not merely the spirit of Jesus but a new spirit arising in the presence of the perils and problems of the twentieth century—a contemporaneous answer to a contemporaneous situation.

The Holy Spirit is any good emotion or impulse which may arise in the breast of a worshiper. It may come at a communion service or in the reading of a stimulating book. Any spirit which for a while seems to take possession of our spirits and lifts them into higher moods, inspires them to look toward far horizons, gives them a unique sense of oneness with everything—that is the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is nothing—only a name for an unknown cause of our elations. A little science would reveal the cause

and disclose the stimulus to be nothing more than a pleasing color, a harmonious tone, a forgotten association. "Many a man" (says Bishop Hughes) "has mistaken the stimulation of a cup of black coffee for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit." If we only knew it, all inspiration has a similar fleshly and terrestrial origin.

The mere act of reviewing such opinions about the Holy Spirit seems to take away all the spirit and all the holiness from the discussion. We have done it because often the best way to discredit discreditable notions is to lift them up into the light. Once seen under the pitiless glare of formal statement, they die like germs in the sunlight and cease to be a threat against our moral and spiritual health.

II

From such irrationality and insufficiency we turn once again to our fundamental conception of God as the totality of reality; the Eternal Spirit claiming the universe as his body; the principle animating, unifying the whole; discovered in science and in history, adumbrated in each mind that thinks, each heart that feels. That Eternal Spirit, finding partial expression in nature and in man, finds his supreme opportunity in Jesus, who just because he is "the chief glory of the race" offered God a channel of self-expression unequaled anywhere else. So that all of God that could express itself on a human plane embodied itself in Jesus, this unique incarnation of the Eternal Spirit being what we mean when we say "Christ." In Jesus Christ the world saw God—all of God which the human mind could appropriate and the human vision endure.

But Jesus was here only a few short years. "He has outsoared the darkness of our night." His form is seen among us no more. Does that mean that the Eternal Spirit who found such a congenial home in the tabernacle of his flesh has also vanished—that we are left alone, abandoned to whatever measure of infinity has been able to seep through the natural order and through our human inheritance? That is what his little group of friends thought would happen, and because they

thought so, sorrow filled their hearts. And well might we join in their sorrow and shudder at the poverty of divinity left with us after Jesus had tantalized us with a vision of the fullness of divine glory. We should not stand "under an empty heaven," but we should certainly be in what would be by contrast "a godless earth." It would be a lapse from the splendor of divine noon to the dimness and loneliness of divine twilight.

But Jesus hastened to assure his friends that they would not be left thus desolate; that if he, the fullest incarnation of God, left the scene, God would still be here, not any longer revealing himself in one familiar form indeed, but in many forms, making himself known in their intellects as the spirit of truth, in their emotions as the spirit of love, in their wills as the spirit of power.

What Jesus said would happen did happen. The disciples who had felt God come near to them in Jesus felt him even nearer at Pentecost. He seemed to be operating upon them now, not through a demonstration of his presence in Jesus, but directly upon their own lives. They were conscious of new moral energy, new intellectual insight, new spiritual fervor. Take your New Testament. Take it apart from all discussions about its inspiration in the usual forensic sense of the word. Take it as a document of life, a record of human experience. Read the Gospels with their unparalleled simplicity and greatness, the Epistles with their amazing profundity and their baffling yet searching implications. Something must have happened to minds which could write thus. And when you recall that every one of these separate documents was written to be read in a public congregation you will have to admit that something must have happened to the members of those congregations to make such utterances intelligible to them. They were for the most part slaves and members of the lower classes. "Not many wise, not many mighty after the flesh," was Paul's own estimate of them. And yet something had kindled their minds, enlarged their powers of spiritual apprehension sufficiently to have persuaded this

same Paul to write the Epistle to the Romans with the expectation that the folks assembled in the little meetings would understand it. Think too of the character transformations there recorded. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."[1] Think of the exuberant vitality which manifested itself in such powerful stimulation even of the physical organism that the sick became well. Apply to those records all the sound historical criticism upon which you can lay your hands, all your psychological concepts of suggestion and "deep analysis," and you still have there a movement and a result which can be explained only by the presence of great energizing forces.

To those of us who have the conception of the universe outlined in this book, what happened at and after Pentecost was simply the fulfillment of Jesus' own expectations, namely, that the God who had so unique an incarnation in him had not with the passing of Jesus passed out of history but, rather, remained and found in the lives of humble men and women, prepared by the teachings of Jesus, an opportunity such as in former days he had only here and there among the prophets, and so was able to do for them and in them what was before only a rare bestowal. This epoch-making Christian experience was what Wheeler Robinson calls "the democratization of the prophetic consciousness."[2]

This enlarged self-giving, this new and greater manifestation of God among the people, this more democratic personal impartation of himself to men is what we mean by the Holy

[1] 1 Cor. 6. 9-11.
[2] *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit.* Harper & Brothers, publishers. Reprinted by permission.

Spirit! Not a third God but the one God, the Father of all mankind, uniquely incarnate in Jesus and in that incarnation fulfilling the office and function of Christ, now able to "come in," as it were, into all minds and hearts who through Christ have learned who he is and how to open their lives to him. He is the spirit of God in contrast to the universe which is the body of God. He is the Spirit of Christ because Christ and God are one, Christ being God manifest on the human plane.

III

And what does all that mean for us? Simply and yet sublimely this—God is at work in our human world; not merely by demonstration and example, as in the life of Jesus; not merely by the social atmosphere created by those who believe in him; but directly. Our impoverished and ineffective human spirit may have an immediate contact with and infusion of the Spirit divine. Because he is a present Spirit of Holiness, and because we are spiritual selves, "spirit with spirit can meet," and in that meeting we may be changed into his likeness.

Here we appeal to experience. Beginning with Paul and continuing through the centuries there is an amazing array of testimony not only from the lips but from the lives of men and women that by a contact with a spiritual reality above and beyond themselves and yet near and within themselves their lives have been transformed. There has been a genuine "newness of life," "increased vitality and power," "a new relation to their fellow men," a "broader and more sympathetic fellowship," a "new sense that all things are now possible."

Surely, none can forget Paul's vivid witness: "The law of the *Spirit of life* in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." And not pausing there, he goes on to say, "It is no longer I that live but Christ who liveth in me." And not at all claiming his own experience as unique, he wrote to his friends of an endowment of the Spirit which would not merely bestow upon them gifts of wisdom and faith, of healing and prophecy, but would lead them into the possession,

even more marvelous, of a love which would lift them into all the moral and spiritual supremacies described in the epic splendor of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians.

And if all that seems far away, think of the tribute paid to the Spirit-invested life of Phillips Brooks, of Trinity Church, Boston, in a letter received from a man who said he was not a churchman but that he could not think of the Boston preacher five minutes without thinking of God. All too often people think of everything else but God when they think of us who are his ministers. They think of ambition and pride, of platform pyrotechnics and pulpit epigrams, of shrewd self-advertisement and the creaking wheels of ecclesiastical stage machinery. But when men confronted Phillips Brooks in person or in reverie, they heard that which compelled them to think of the divine Musician who had picked up the harp of his life and sweeping all its chords with supernatural might had evoked a music of celestial sweetness and power. The secret of his life Phillips Brooks has disclosed to us in his undying Christmas hymn:

"O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend on us we pray,
Cast out our sin and enter in—
Be born in us to-day!"

As we read those lines we see the great Bishop of Boston joining hands across the centuries with Paul of Tarsus as common experience unites them, and they bear a common witness to the power of the Divine Spirit to recreate the human spirit in his own likeness, which is the likeness of Christ.

Time would fail me to tell of black Amanda Smith, lifted from the washboard to the evangelistic platform, where at home and overseas she spoke with a power and an unction, the memory of which across all these years thrills my heart as I pen these lines; of Dwight L. Moody, the unlettered grocer's clerk, who, energized by the Spirit, became a "worker in souls" whose dynamic career leaves even his skeptical biographer

with a wistfulness which he cannot quite conceal; of an E. Stanley Jones, whose amazing march across the lives of twentieth-century Christendom began when he discovered that there was present in the world a Spirit whose divine omnipotence awaits only a surrendered human impotence to manifest itself in challenging word and arresting deed; of many nameless and humble who have been in every community a leaven of righteousness surprising and transforming the sour dough of formal religion.

This doctrine of the Holy Spirit as the regenerating, sanctifying activity of a present God is one which our century needs to master. The church even has largely lost sight of God's presence and power. On the one hand are those who are infected with the spirit characterized by Lewis Carroll in *Through the Looking Glass,* when he makes the White Queen say, "She's in that state of mind that she wants to deny something—only she doesn't know what to deny." On the other hand are those who have a passion to affirm, but they do not seem to get anywhere with their affirmations. They affirm God, but they do not know him. They affirm the eternity of the moral ideal, but they are not able to make it real. In spite of their affirmations of the Divine they are thoroughgoing humanists, never having consciously felt a power not themselves that makes for righteousness, experiencing no transformations, rejoicing in no regenerations. Our age needs once again to ponder the meaning of the conviction concerning the Holy Spirit epitomized in Redding's fine description: "God's magnet is a man of God, electrified by the Spirit of God."

In our contemplation of the experience of man with the Holy Spirit we are poignantly reminded of a new method of attainment, which is nevertheless an old method—"waiting upon God." If God is a Holy Spirit seeking a transforming entrance into our lives, *our chief task is to let him in.* "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." That is not quietism but the quiet which precedes all creative activity. It is not a vacant staring into space, but an opening of the bays of the soul to admit the full-

ness of the tides from the Infinite Sea. It is not an idleness which would turn the Holy Spirit into an errand-boy, but a receptivity which makes possible the coming of the Eternal Energy into feet which shall be swift to run in ways of toilsome service to humanity.

This year the church approaches the anniversary of Pentecost. On the one hand is the peril of a celebration which will be only the attempt to revive a dubious emotionalism at our church altars. On the other hand is the danger of a mere commemoration of the founding of the Christian Church which will mean nothing to the church of the twentieth century because of a failure to rediscover the secret of the immense spiritual energy which called the church of the first century into being. That secret is embedded in the experience which is enshrined for us in a true doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Without that experience there would have been no Christian Church. Without a recovery of the meaning and power of that experience the church of to-day and to-morrow will be but a shadow of its true self.

CHAPTER V

ON BEING SAVED

SALVATION is not merely a tarnished word. It is almost a lost word. Can you remember the last time you heard it in a religious sense? Our fathers used to get down on their knees and thank God for "the plan of salvation"; our children do not even suspect that there is a plan, and are not at all sure that they would be interested if there were. Our ecclesiastical predecessors used to sing, "Salvation, oh the joyful sound"; such singing would affect many of our contemporaries as strangely as the revival of a street song of the days of Elizabeth. Pastoral reports to church papers and annual assemblies and conferences recited, among the chronicles of the year's achievements, the number of souls saved. To-day we report the number of accessions to the church membership and do not risk a guess as to whether any of them are actually saved or not. Once upon a time the one great test of a man's status in certain communities was his ability to answer in the affirmative the question, "Are you saved?" Now nobody would ever think of putting such a question to his neighbors, and if he did, his answer would most likely be a look of blank amazement. To die unsaved was once the last word in tragedy; now the question is, "How much did he leave his family?" Moody often said: "I would rather be loathsome in the sight of my fellow men than to die with the leprosy of sin on my soul"; weight and complexion seem to be the chief concern among us. We will risk the rest.

I

There are, of course, reasons for this decease of a word and the dismissal of the idea once associated with it.

1. We have revolted from the legalism which grew up about

it. It was not so long since that salvation was considered a transaction in heaven, whereby, in return for a man's acceptance of the substitute offering of Christ, his moral offenses were written off the docket of the celestial court, the penalties due him were remitted, the righteousness of another was imputed to him, he was adopted into the family, and, thenceforth, was accounted saved. Sometimes the whole process was ascribed to a divine foreordination; sometimes it waited upon man's free consent. But in either case it was legal and external. It directed attention not to the development of spiritual interest and moral will, but to a bookkeeping in heaven. "Is my name written there?" inquired many a one who knew well enough that it was written on many books of uncollectable accounts in the market places of the earth. The otherworldly emphasis involved threw an atmosphere of unreality and of moral irresponsibility about the whole process. Such a process and such a result could not commend to our time a concern for salvation. We are quite suspicious of any effort to foist upon the relation of God and man anything of the spirit and procedure of our human jurisprudence, and we have utterly no use for a salvation which pretends to fix a man up as far as heaven is concerned, but leaves his earthly life in a moral mess.

2. We have become a bit shy of the emotional associations once so closely linked with the word "salvation." As long ago as the mystery cults of Greece, devices were used to produce states of enthusiasm and ecstasy by which it was believed that man came into saving contact with God, and, as a result of the divine life imparted by that contact, man believed himself immune against fate's most appalling visitations, even against death. That same faith in emotion as the channel or the evidence of the operation of divine power has been present even in the Christian centuries. At Methodist altars and in Presbyterian inquiry rooms emotion has been the object of sometimes painful search. How often did we hear the plea, "Bless me, Lord," when the request was not for an awakening of moral

deficiencies, a searchlight upon the unethical character of one's business and political life, a power to lead a clean life of ethical love, but just to be made happy. And if something happened in the emotional processes of one seeker to make him clap hands and shout "Hallelujah," he was the envy of all his fellow seekers who were driven into deeper gloom than ever because they "could not get that feeling." *They* were sometimes very much more keen in their ethical self-scrutiny and more bent on those nameless unremembered acts of devotion which make up the tale of a good man's life, but they were not listed among the saved because they had not been set on fire emotionally. We know too much about the casual and very earthly origin of emotions to-day to accept them either as a witness to or a channel of the saving agency of the Eternal Spirit. A spiritually harmonized life will undoubtedly have its own unique emotional reward, but every jubilation is not the child of the Spirit. Sometimes the heaviest-hearted soul in a group may be the one most closely allied with God, for God has his Calvaries as well as his Mounts of Transfiguration.

3. We are even more averse to the grammar of salvation once in vogue. We do not believe anybody *is* saved. Someone has distinguished between Methodists and Presbyterians by saying, "The Methodists know they are saved now, but are not sure they are going to be saved yonder; the Presbyterians are certain they will be saved by and by, but are a bit dubious about it now." In either case salvation was considered a completed task. The Methodist, believing firmly in the witness of the Spirit, took for granted the completeness of his present salvation, but confessed that he might forfeit it. The Presbyterian, dubious about any present evidence of his enrollment among the elect, nevertheless believed that, if he were enrolled he was actually and finally saved. The job was done and there was no power in the will of the devil or in his own will to spoil it. But we are, again, too well acquainted with human nature to believe that the process is ever as complete and perfect as some Methodists asserted it to be, and we are too con-

fident of the character of God to believe that he will be content with a salvation by decrees, which leaves no place for the final choice on the part of the individual, or that he will save a man by and by without doing something significant and self-evidencing in him here and now. The book of Acts speaks of the early church as a fellowship of those who were *"being saved."* If salvation means anything to modern ears, it is as a continuous process. A man is not safe as long as he is in the presence of real danger, and danger is everywhere about us. It was twenty centuries ago that Paul said he feared, lest having preached to others, he himself might become a castaway. Even he knew no salvation that was as complete and finished as the grammar of some has attempted to make it.

II

But there is a reality here which must not escape us; a process which must be begun and carried on in all of our lives; an experience which all ought to share.

There are times in human life when the word "salvation" and all of its derivatives *live*. When the passengers of the Vestris, tossing in lifeboats on an angry sea or floating in life belts or on rafts on the "rude imperious surge," were finally lifted to the decks of the rescue ship after hours in which hope was at death grips with despair, do you think they felt any hesitancy about describing their experience as salvation? When a man is wheeled away to the operating room to give his body into the keeping of the surgeon who has informed him that he has a desperate condition with chances ten to one against him, and when, after an hour's skillful work on the part of the surgeon in which he centers on that suffering organism not only all his own skill, but the experience of generations of surgical practice, and when, after weeks of slow convalescence, the man walks out of the hospital and back to the family whom he never expected to see again and to the task which he had to leave unfinished, is he indulging in unreality when he says the surgeon *saved* him. When Per Hansa, lost in a Western bliz-

zard, stumbling on and on against snow that drove like icy needles, fighting the drowsiness which meant death, fighting a battle that seemed without respite and without end, thinking how sweet it would be to sit down in the drift and let sleep and frost finish the tale, finally all but frozen ran full tilt against a log wall and in another moment found himself in a warm room surrounded by folks, suddenly tumbled out of the icy jaws of death into the warm lap of life—did the idea of salvation oppress him with any sense of its unreality?

When men are in peril they know what it means to be saved and the keener their sense of peril the more eager they are to assure themselves of salvation. I suppose most of you who read these pages have had some experience of salvation—salvation from physical suffering, from gross mental delusion, from economic disaster, from social catastrophe, from irksome temporary situations precipitated by bores and blunderers, even from death. And perhaps you have been intensely grateful to whoever or whatever it was that saved you, even to the point of sharing that deliverance with others, recommending your saviour to those in similar straits or even assuming yourselves the rôle of deliverer.

2. The idea of salvation in the normal human experience is a glorious one. It carries with it nothing of the fictitious, the unreal, the fanatic. Now, let us carry something of that soundness, that practicality into our appraisal of the salvation which religion offers. Let us think of religion as the proposal and program of the abundant life. We shall have to do that if we think of it as Jesus did. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." The function of Christ's religion is to make possible for man life in its fullest possible realization. If he is in any sense a Saviour, and if what he provides is in any sense a salvation, it is because the abundant life is constantly in peril from which there is need of rescue.

Is there any such peril? Surely, one needs only to ask to receive from any intelligent reader an immediate and positive

answer. We are all constantly under attacks, pressures, threats, which endanger our richest life.

(*a*) Burdens and fears cripple us—the burdens of life, fears of the universe. Through all the centuries three great deep shadows have enveloped the human path—adversity, moral evil, death! "All religions," says Wheeler Robinson, "meet the challenge of their presence, and all religions must do something to dispel their darkness, so definite and so central is the demand of man's heart for deliverance."[1] Gamaliel Bradford speaks about "the abject misery of life, the pain, the grief, the anguish, the disappointment and at best the blighting weariness which we all hide and fight against, but cannot escape." Goethe, universally regarded as having been one of the most fortunate and successful and happy, declared: "I will say nothing against the course of my existence. But at bottom it has been nothing but pain and burden, and I can affirm that during the whole of my seventy-five years, I have not had four weeks of genuine well-being." These and many others who might be quoted, who have uttered their threnody over life, are not misanthropes, but simply serious and thoughtful persons who have faced with open eyes the life from which multitudes try to hide behind hectic hurry and accumulated sensation, and who have confessed that which these multitudes would feel if they did not drug themselves into intellectual stupor or make themselves hilarious with the champagne of artificial excitement. Every great thinker has confessed the seriousness of the human problem which is involved in the burden of life and the fear of death.

(*b*) Moral evil equally limits life—in fact, that is what we mean by moral evil, namely, that to which we give consent, with which we align ourselves whether in thought or desire or deed, and which in its result constricts and defeats the largest life of our fellows and of ourselves. Our often pitiful human plight is not simply the peril with which the universe sur-

[1] *The Christian Experience of The Holy Spirit.* Harper & Brothers, publishers. Reprinted by permission.

rounds us, but that which we bring upon ourselves either through ignorance or by our untamed and undisciplined desires.

> "For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
> The saddest are these 'It might have been.'"

This is the real tragedy of life—that we can all go back along the path and lay our finger on this spot and that and say, "If only—how different life would have been!" He who could save us from our own moral blindness and perversity would be a deliverer indeed.

The fact of the matter is we need salvation even more than the man lost in the blizzard or the patient on the operating table. A few minutes more for them and trouble would have been over as far as this life is concerned, while we face years of mutilations and miseries.

3. Now, the character of our perils determines what must be the character of any salvation which is actually to save us. We cannot escape the universe with its catastrophes, its possibilities of moral evil, its decree of death. Our salvation must necessarily be, not that which lifts us out of peril, but that which saves us in the midst of peril. It must deliver us from the fear of life with all its frightful possibilities and of death with its ultimate certainty. It must impart confidence in the presence of a universe which threatens our health, our happiness, our peace, our security. It must make possible for man moral victory through the revelation of genuine moral values and through the awakening of interest in those values. And it must issue in regeneration, individual and social, "for no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." If we wear broadcloth shirts and walk on rubber heels and eat rice and confine our hair in nets, across the sea are men and women and children who are dehumanized and devitalized by the industrial conditions we support by our purchases. If we invest our money in corporation stock and help finance organizations, our dividends often are made possible by the denial of a living or

cultural wage. And not even God himself can bring the fullest life to the victims of these inhuman methods until the method is changed.

Or perhaps we ourselves are engaged in business and industry. We would like to enter into a redemptive fellowship with men who work for us. But the economic order with its methods of captalization, its fierce competition for markets makes such a fellowship impossible. William D. Hapgood and Arthur Nash were able to make of their factories a partnership which opened for them wide doors into the hearts of their workmen and into thrilling and life-enriching experiences. But many of us are so entangled with the hard mechanism of capitalism that we cannot tear loose and run into the arms of our fellows. And God cannot bring to *us* the fullness of life which such genuine fellowship offers until the order is Christianized. If we are to be saved, in the sense that the most abundant life is made possible for us all, whatever offers itself as a salvation must radically change the present methods of society.

4. Christianity claims to provide just such a salvation. In succeeding chapters I shall examine the methods of that salvation and test its validity in life. This chapter must halt with the citation of some of the wealth of testimony in its behalf.

If one will open his New Testament, he will find there the jubilant affirmation of folks like ourselves, living within the Roman Empire, that through Christ salvation had come to them. Luke's Gospel began with a doxology, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, . . . that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; . . . that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." And if one turns the pages which exhibit the human experience of that day when men first came into contact with the Christian message, he will find them saying, "The darkness is past. We are no longer children of the night, but of the day. We are more than con-

querors through him that loved us." Confronting the bondage which Greek and Jew alike confessed and from which their moralities and their speculations and their mysteries had been able to bring no deliverance, they sang songs of freedom and joy. The Roman Empire, planting itself on shattered cities and subject states, was full of pain. The Christians met pain and transfigured it. Attempt had been made to conquer the fear of death by philosophy and the promises of the mystery religions, but the fear of death still brooded over them. Christianity came and men approached death in the arena or at home alike with radiant faces and swept out into the unknown with a pæan of triumph. And, finally, what is revealed in the New Testament is a social impulse which looked forward to the organization of all human life under the rule of redeeming love. Supplement these with two modern testimonies:

Here is Tolstoy confessing through one of his characters the moral renovation which came to him after years of defeated and dingy life. "Never had he felt in greater need of cleansing. He was horrified at the chasm that yawned between the life he was leading and the demands of his own conscience. At first it seemed a hopeless case. *Such confusion! Such rubbish! Who could possibly set the house in order?* 'Have you not already tried to be a better man, and what did it amount to?' said the voice of the tempter, speaking in his soul. 'Why should you try again? You are only one of many; such is life,' whispered the voice. But the spiritual nature which alone is genuine, alone powerful, alone eternal, had already awakened in Nekhludof. And in his spiritual nature only could he trust. However vast the distance between what he was and what he wished to be, nothing could discourage this newly awakened spiritual being. . . . He prayed asking the Lord to enter in and purify him; and lo, while he was thus praying, it came to pass. The Lord was really dwelling in his awakened conscience. He realized his own nature created in the image of the Divine; and therefore not only the freedom, courage, and joy of life became his own, but all the power of virtue likewise.

The best a man may do, he now felt himself capable of doing."[2]

Curiously enough, in his summary concerning Mr. Moody's preaching, this confession is wrung from the pen of Gamaliel Bradford: "No doubt to some of us such symbolization seems remote and even barbaric. But there is one thing that is not remote, and that is death. You may try to forget it or hide it with flowers or with adjectives or with theories. . . . But death is there . . . with all its burden of haunting, tormenting . . . inevitable question. . . . Moody's answer to that question may or may not have present and permanent validity, but I do not know that the ages have found anything more comforting or satisfying."[3]

What I am trying to do in these simple quotations is not to close the case, but to remind you that in Christianity in all the centuries men have found not a formal and external, but an actual salvation from the foes of life. They have trusted and obeyed, often at very great cost, but their faith and deed have been answered by peace and moral victory, by social insight and courage. They have given the world an exhibition, in the midst of tumult;

> "Of hearts as calm as lakes that sleep
> Beneath the frosty moonlight glistening,
> Or mountain torrents where they creep
> Along a channel smooth and deep
> To their own far-off murmurs listening."

But they have also pioneered difficult ways into the secrets of social regeneration and have lifted others as they themselves were lifted into that "fellowship of the mark of pain" which has become in the end a fellowship of the sons of glory.

I propose in following chapters to inquire at their hands and at the hands of life whether the salvation they found is available for us who face the sobering and terrifying problems and miseries of the twentieth century.

[2] *Resurrection*, vol. i. pp. 128, 129. Reprinted by permission of Thomas Y. Crowell Company, publishers.

[3] *Dwight L. Moody*, p. 77, Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., publishers. Reprinted by permission.

CHAPTER VI

SHALL WE REPENT?

"At one time it is from the hostile forces of the natural world that man seeks to be delivered, from pain and sickness and death, from famine or earthquake or pestilence. At another time it is from matter itself. At another from finiteness. At another from public or private foes. At another from the lower elements in one's moral constitution. At one time deliverance is sought from the past; at another time from the present; at another from the future. The human conception of evil varies indefinitely; but redemption is the universal cry of the human heart."[1]

Sit down long enough in any land among any group of people and you will hear that cry. In the moan of the saxophone and the thump of jazz at the night clubs and in the feverish activities of women's clubs; in the sleek assemblage about the mahogany tables in the directors' rooms of great corporations and in the tattered array of humanity gathered under the low ceiling of I. W. W. headquarters on the back street; in the scarlet-coated procession of riders to the hunt and in the slow tramp of greasy overalls returning from the shops —everywhere men are seeking salvation from ever-present foes of health, happiness, and life.

Toward that salvation other forces will have their contributions to make. Science will aid in the mastery of nature. Industry will produce and business will distribute for our material satisfactions. Education will discipline our minds and make them fit for analysis of the pressing problems of the present and will enrich our lives with the conquests of the past.

[1] Scullard, *The Ethics of the Gospel and the Ethics of Nature.*

But none of the above, nor all of them together, can bring us the salvation we crave. After they have done their best, we shall still be beset with foes which mutilate and destroy life. "There is little likelihood," says Reinhold Niebuhr, "that science will be able to overcome all the ills to which the human flesh is heir. . . . Even at best, science cannot destroy nature's final irrelevancy, death. There can, therefore, be no real victory over nature except by the strategy of transcending her failures."[2] And what he has said about something more than science to cope with nature, applies equally to man's fight with himself and his effort to construct a nobler society. All along the battle line where life is engaged in combat with death, there is call for a larger strategy. Such a strategy Christianity offers to the world. It says to men everywhere in every condition: "Here is the guarantee of abundant life. You cannot always escape sickness and pain. Frustration will await many of your plans. In your home and your shop and your social relations there will be throttling influences at work. But you can transcend it all, and in spite of it win for yourself and for those about you life eternal, life that here and now is crowned with immortality."

I

The first step in such a transcendence according to the Christian scheme is repentance. But the modern world needs to know that we do not recommend the futile moods and slovenly practices which have often assumed that name.

1. An emotional orgy arising out of the memories of one's sins is not repentance. I took a drunken man home once and put him to bed under my own roof and fought through with him an attack of delirium tremens. And when the storm had passed and the nerves were steadier and the brain was clearer, I sat down on the bed beside him and talked to him with all

[2] *Does Civilization Need Religion?* The Macmillan Company, publishers. Reprinted by permission.

the impassioned conviction I possessed about the peril of the way he was walking. Floods of grief swept over his soul. He arose from the bed, kneeled down by its side and in words throbbing with emotion poured out the story of his shame and raised a cry for deliverance. Within a day or so he went back to work and within a week he was at his cups again. He had not repented. He had merely purchased a little temporary self-respect by weeping over his follies. Tears are often our poor substitute for the deeds our better self demands of us. It is so much easier to sigh than to change.

2. The call to repentance is not a call to wallow in the mire of self-depreciation. Spinoza and Kant and Fichte were not talking wildly when they said, each in his own tongue, "Sorrow over the past is wasted energy." And Walt Whitman, even, expressed something of which evangelicals might take note when he praised the cows for not weeping over their sins. When a true man understands what he has done to himself and to his fellow men and to God by a deed whose result classifies it as a sin, he is quite likely to have some unpleasant moments about it. But that unpleasantness, though it deepens into the sorrow of despair, is not repentance. In Faust, when Marguerite becomes aware of the world's attitude toward her and her fall, as reflected in the coarse gossip at the village fountain and in the brutal upbraiding of her brothers dying at the hands of Faust, she finally, under the powerful influence of a chant of doom in the cathedral, falls in a swoon. But that swooning was a pang of humiliation, not the purgation of genuine penitence. Judas was so overwhelmed with remorse over his betrayal of Jesus that he could not face the world nor live with his memories. But he did not repent; he merely emotionalized. And his lifeless body swinging from the limb of a tree on the outskirts of Jerusalem is the symbol to all time of the abyss between repentance and mere remorse. The call to repentance is not a call to work up an emotional spasm nor to grant indulgence to groans and tears which come unbidden in the presence of shocking self-revelation.

3. Nor is repentance a mere recognition of the claims of conventional morality. Walter Rauschenbusch used to tell a story which has become a classic. It was about a farmer who had sent to the city milk which tests proved to be considerably watered. Accordingly, a red tag was placed on the returned cans. When the rural culprit went down to get his cans for another shipment and saw the telltale tag which not only assured him that his sin was found out but branded him in the eyes of the honest men in the community, he broke out in voluble and lurid profanity. But when he was haled before the church committee to be tried for misconduct, the charge laid against him was on the ground of profanity alone. Nothing was said about his assault upon the city's children, who were dependent upon good milk for nourishment and life.

The moral recognitions which characterize much that has passed for repentance have been about as impoverished as that. We deplore profanity, but seem unaware of the guilt of adulterated goods. We should be ashamed to steal a dollar, but we steal a client without a qualm. We could not imagine ourselves rifling a safety deposit box, but we run away with a corporation and lie down at night utterly content with our goodness. We should repudiate the very suggestion of throwing ourselves away in drunkenness, but we do throw ourselves away in sport and social scrambles and in idleness at summer and winter resorts and feel no compunctions about it. We should be ashamed to run away and leave a woman helpless before the attack of a brute, but we hide away in our parlors and clubs while the coal and iron police ravage womanhood on a large scale and never lift a voice until enough other people are doing it to make it perfectly safe, and our consciences do not seem to trouble us any. What I am saying is that so many of us who profess every Sunday to repent of our sins never make any genuine exploration of our lives to discover just what our policies and practices are actually doing to ourselves and society. We hurriedly measure ourselves by the conventions of our set, we make verbal amends before God if any

breaches thrust themselves upon our attention and go away feeling justified. That is not repentance. It is merely applying a little religious polish to a somewhat tarnished self-respect. It bears no relation to the strategy by which a man transcends the foes of life. It is, if anything, a surrender to the worst of them, those foes which prey upon us because our conventional morality has not even guessed their deadliness.

4. And, of course, repentance is not simply a device by which one escapes the penalty of yesterday's wrongdoing. A man who had had a serious quarrel with a neighbor was told that he was going to die and if he had any matters to fix up, he had better do it at once. Accordingly, the neighbor was summoned and with abject apology for his wrong the dying man begged forgiveness. The neighbor, of course, could not refuse such a straight appeal from dying lips. Assurance was given that all was forgiven and would be forgotten. But as the visitor turned to go, the dying man raised himself on his elbow and shaking a quivering finger at him said, "But, mind, if I get well, this don't count."

Much so-called repentance has no reference whatsoever to the future because it represents no change in purpose. It is only an easy way to cancel one's moral debts. It is a petition in moral bankruptcy which delivers one out of the hands of his creditors, but does not make him an honest man nor guarantee a wise management of affairs in the days to come.

All this vapid and worthless emotionalism, this moral futility, this selfish immunity which has become associated with the word "repentance" has largely discredited it in the eyes of thoughtful people. It seems to be not a process of making life, but a means of escaping life; not a transforming agency, but a trick by which one avoids the unpleasant necessity of making personal readjustment and social atonement.

II

Repentance is an attempted translation of the Greek word *metanoia,* but the meaning cannot be translated in a single

word.[3] It means a change of the inner man. It is not merely emotional, but intellectual and ethical; not negative, but positive; not a mere turning away from sin, but an enthusiasm for righteousness; not retrospective, but prospective; not a mere revulsion against what one has done in the past, but a moral renewal that looks toward the steady and progressive transformation of the entire life. At its root lies a deeper insight into conduct and its effect upon self and society. The man who has been seeking fullness of life by certain practices awakens to the discovery that he is actually killing in himself the capacities and powers that he wants to have live and at the same time he is making a full and free life more difficult for others.

Such an awakening may come in a flash of blinding light. It so came to Saul when on the Damascus road, pursuing in order to exterminate the followers of Jesus, he suddenly became aware that he was fighting against an indestructible spiritual order, that he was kicking against the goads, that injury and death to his spirit lay in the continuance of such practice. It so came to Sebald, who in the abandon of his sensual passion for Ottima hears a silk-winder singing,

> "God's in his heaven,
> All's right with the world,"

and is roused out of his moral stupor to say,

> ". . . That little peasant's voice
> Has righted all again. Though I be lost,
> I know which is the better, never fear,
> Of vice or virtue, purity or lust."

It may come gradually as the result of a multiplication of disappointments as the fruit of one's doing turns to ashes on the lips. It may be the final result of an accumulation of experiences such as struck home to the heart of Elizabeth Knight who, having "loved not wisely, but too well," realized the emptiness of it all and "sitting on the edge of the bed, wrap-

[3] See the fine article in Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics.*

ping a silk coverlet about her, her face haggard with pain and a touch of brooding horror sobbed out, 'Is that all?'" Men and women who have walked the primrose path of dalliance with instinct, or have climbed to the gilded throne of economic or political power, or have pursued the phantom of social prestige sometimes discover that *"that is all,"* and with that discovery they recall again the ideals they learned in home, sweet home, the virtues exemplified in a Socrates, a Lincoln, a Frances Willard, or Jesus, and they know by an immediate personal recognition that virtue is better than vice, kindness nobler than cruelty, love and self-sacrifice and humility and patience the true method for the release of life. The result of that insight is revolutionary. The soul revolts against the habits and practices which once hypnotized it. It turns with determination toward that which now appears as the ideal and the bringer of life. There is a complete about face and as far as the old, life-destroying sins are concerned, its back is upon them as it marches toward the new goals discovered by the illuminated mind.

That does not mean, and it must not be taken to mean, that one act of clear moral insight and the resulting revolution suffice for the entire life. They are sufficient usually for the specific practice with which they are concerned. But as we move on from lower levels to higher in our pursuit of life, we discover new foes, foes more subtle, but none the less hostile to the fullest individual and social realizations. And if we are to transcend them, the process must be repeated again—new insights into results, new revulsions, new dedications, new directions; in fact, one can mark his progress to higher and higher planes of life, to wider and wider areas of life, by the frequency of experiences of this kind, experiences which for want of a better name we call repentance.

I have on my shelves a book which was written during the war by one of America's most prominent ministers. It is a frank and impassioned plea for our participation in the bloody struggle and for the use of arms in an attempt to make the

world safe for democracy. Since then the writer has had a new insight into the nature of war and an utter revulsion of feeling about the war system. "War means everything that Jesus did not mean and nothing that he did mean. . . . Never again will I bless war," he says in his public confession. Dr. John Henry Jowett was a saint if ever England and America saw one, but Doctor Jowett never got beyond the place of repentance. At the very end of his life he ordered destroyed a whole group of sermons which he had preached only a few years earlier. A new insight had brought a new evaluation, and that which he had in all sincerity proclaimed in the name of Christ to the admiring audiences who crowded to hear and to hang breathless upon the bewitching tones of that silvery voice, suddenly revealed themselves as worthy only of the ash-heap. That is what repentance ought to mean—an ever-deepening insight into the significance of one's words and deeds, ever stronger revulsions against the law by which multitudes are content to govern their lives, ever firmer dedications to those nobler ideals which rise in our sky, like the star of Bethlehem, to guide us to the manger of the King.

3. When such an experience is present there is a further happy result: a strong desire is awakened to make atonement for the injury which in his days of blindness was done to another. Because one sees clearly how wrong he has been, the spirit cannot rest until something has been done to make that wrong right. A man once came to me and placed in my hands fifteen thousand dollars in cash and securities to be given back to a firm whom he had defrauded when occupying a position of trust and responsibility. There was no legal compulsion operating upon him. No one knew of the fraud. The books were all destroyed. Years had passed since he had been connected with the company. When I put that sum into the hands of the president and told him its source, his utter astonishment revealed how ignorant they were of any raid upon the company's treasury. No, there was no fear of detection, no threat of prison, urging this costly restitution. It was simply

the change of mind which came over this man as he saw his transactions in their true light, a change which could not leave him content until he had made every effort to right the course of events which he had set in motion.

Surely, it is not difficult to see the place of true repentance in the strategy of salvation. It is the first step in the victory over moral evil, in the cleansing of the social order from practices which bring misery to multitudes, in that integration of the self and the establishment of that harmony with the moral and spiritual universe which alone make man immune against the corrosive power of adversity and the fear of death.

III

And now a word about the method of achieving such a "metanoia."

1. There is required first of all the utmost moral sincerity; not merely a willingness, but a determination to see things as they are, uninfluenced by their effect upon our own pride or possessions. A recent tragic experience in a coal-mining town in Pennsylvania gives me just exactly the illustration I want. An innocent miner was taken by the Company Coal and Iron Policemen to their private barracks and literally hammered to death. Anybody who looked at that bleeding, battered body, with a dozen or more cuts on the face and with every rib broken, a poor twisted, mutilated remnant of humanity, if he thought about that body and not whether his own company might be liable for damages or an iniquitous police system might be visited with the heaped-up wrath of outraged public opinion, would not need four days to decide that there before him was the victim of unspeakable brutality. The evidence was there to be seen by anyone whose eyes were not blinded by ulterior considerations. But the officials of the Coal Company required all of four days before they finally issued from their offices a statement condemning the murder.

It is just these ulterior considerations which stand in the way of us all. We do not see our polite immoralities just be-

cause we do not look at them with honest eyes. We are thinking about our popularity, our promotions, our chances, our comforts. When Jesus was here the one thing he most feared was this habit of fooling ourselves. And the one thing he most desired was absolute sincerity. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." "Blessed are the pure in heart," the guileless, the artless, the unsophisticated, "for they shall see God."

2. Finally, this constant revaluation of values, this progressive change of mind, waits upon our willingness to keep company with the best. Arthur Quiller Couch in that delightful book, *The Art of Reading,* says it clearly: "It is the property of masterpieces that they are not only as Lamb wrote of Shakespeare, 'enrichers of fancy,' 'strengtheners of virtue,' . . . but they raise your gorge to defend you from swallowing the fifth rate, the sham, the fraudulent. . . . I cannot for my part conceive any man who has incorporated the Phædo or the Paradiso in himself, lending himself for a moment to one or other of the follies plastered . . . on the firm purpose of the nation . . . the vanities, say, of baby-week."[4] There is nothing that quickens artistic insight like living with great art, musical judgment like hearing great music, moral discernment like keeping spiritual company with a hero and saint. It was after Peter lived with Jesus that he fell on his knees saying, "I am a sinful man, O Lord." If we will live with him, ponder his words, recount his deeds, measure his life, stand in reverence before his cross, we too shall find our gorge rising at the fifth rate, the fraudulent, the sham, and we shall discover our lives constantly in the process of remaking, of progressive repentance and renewal.

[4] Reprinted by permission of G. P. Putnam's Sons, publishers.

CHAPTER VII

FAITH THAT FUNCTIONS

I

FACING the universal demand for salvation from adversity, moral evil and death, Christianity has from the beginning emphasized faith as the central factor in the strategy of salvation. Its emphasis has impressed a multitude who have turned to faith as the instrument of deliverance for which they seek. What faith has become under such incentives is a religious tragedy of no small proportions.

1. Some have interpreted it as the blind acceptance of whatever is presented as truth by traditional authority, whether book or church. In a sermon published in a Pittsburgh newspaper recently the preacher said: "One of the evidences of the divine origin of the Bible is the fact that it teaches doctrines which from the standpoint of man's mind are irreconcilable. Among these are the doctrines of predestination and the doctrine of free will and responsibility." When I read that I felt sorry for God, sorry that his advocates can find no surer proof of his presence than a glaring contradiction. What an advertisement for the God of truth, to be pictured as the author of obfuscation! But if I felt sorry for God, I felt sorrier for the men and women whose conception of faith is the acceptance of that which sane thinking denies. That is not faith: it is acquiescence. Between the two there is the distance between heaven and hell. Acquiescence is merely submission: faith is possession. Acquiescence is surrender to what seems to be false; faith is adventure in behalf of that which seems to us to be true. Acquiescence is assent under compulsion; faith is consent as the result of conviction. Acquiescence is the deed of the coward or the mentally lazy; faith is the attitude of the hero, the spiritually alert.

2. Others have made faith synonymous with strain, a *strain* to believe something which someone has urged upon us in order that we may receive something he has to give. In one of Lewis Carroll's stories there is a scene where one of the characters confesses inability to believe something which is urged by another. Whereupon this significant advice is given: "Shut your eyes real tight and try real hard." It is a dramatic putting of the notion of faith espoused in some quarters—a willful closing of one's eyes to what seems to be real and an agonized effort to believe what seems to be very unreal. The utter dishonesty of such a process ought to be apparent to anyone, and yet such dishonesty is assumed to be a part of that faith which is the divinely chosen instrument of salvation. Whatever faith is, it is at least not dishonor. The God of truth could not ask us to be false to our best insights. One ought not to *try* to believe anything, for there is something essentially contradictory in the notion of stress and the notion of faith. One ought to try only to discover the facts and experience the values of life. He ought to keep mind and heart open for such discovery. But to bludgeon himself into the acceptance as fact of what seems to be only an illusion, or to browbeat his soul into declarations of value where one has found only vanity, is to be a hypocrite even though it be done in the name of piety. Whatever else we do, we must be real. Salvation cannot come through self-deception. Salvation, if it comes at all, comes through harmonious adjustment to reality. Such an adjustment is hardly likely to result from trying to make ourselves believe that reality is what we are convinced it is not.

3. Emotion has sometimes been accepted as faith. Groping souls have been taught to seek, not truth, but a feeling of assurance. Devices have been employed to produce that feeling. Unwittingly the psychology of rhythm and of suggestion has been used. Soothing hymns have been sung. Dogmatic statement has been repeated over and over again. The seeker has been urged to join in such repetition. After a while a com-

fortable condition of the sensibilities is secured and the seeker goes away believing himself to have acquired faith.

Such people are characterized by many ups and downs in their faith life. Inevitably emotions come and go. A man cannot feel the same when wrestling with a punctured tire on a muddy road at midnight as he does when sitting in a comfortable pew listening to a soothing anthem or to homiletic reiterations of familiar doctrines. He may feel like a believer in church: it would not be edifying to tell what he feels like when tugging away at the tire which refuses to come off.

People who have such a conception of faith are fond of dogmatic preaching. They do not seem vitally concerned with what the preacher asserts just so he keeps on asserting it and does not change his theme or tempo. They say frankly that they do not go to church to think or to have questions raised. Thought and emotion exist usually in inverse ratio; and questions are disconcerting. They greatly complain about the disturbance of their faith in the presence of pulpit inquiry. And their complaint is justified—if faith is a mere feeling of assurance. But they are wrong. Real faith does carry with it an assurance-feeling. Once a man is convinced of truth, is certain that he is on the track of reality, he looks out upon the swirling tides of life and says,

> "Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
> From its firm base as soon as I."

Planted on the Rock of Ages, no stormy blasts dismay him; no leer of moral enemies, no ghostly questions strike terror to his soul. Faith does bring an assurance-feeling. But all assurance-feeling is not faith. It may be only a passing emotion produced by temporary conditions in one's environment. Or, what is worse, it may be a sense of security maintained by a steady refusal to deal with the facts. Faith is the conviction born in the mind which has looked at all the facts available and has discovered in them a meaning with which the soul can live in peace. It is not disturbed by a change in environment,

for it has already considered the possibility of such a change. It is not dismayed by questions, for it has already asked and answered them. It is not appalled by an invitation to think, for it is the result of the thinking of a mind that is candid and unafraid.

4. Sometimes faith has been so mutilated as to become a mere password. That is especially true about faith in Christ. The church sometimes has proclaimed certain facts about Christ's life and certain doctrines about his person as ecclesiastical mysteries which nobody could understand, but which everybody must accept because such an acceptance is the only "open sesame" to which the pearly gates will unfold. The result, of course, has been that faith in Christ is not anything that carries real "life-content" for one; it has neither intellectual nor emotional nor volitional associations. It is simply something one must repeat in order to belong here and to be admitted yonder. When Paul Jawarski went to the electric chair a few weeks ago, his so-called spiritual adviser urged him, in spite of a life which had evidenced no conviction in matters of religion, to declare his faith anyhow. And when he refused to affirm what he did not believe, the spiritual *deviser* suggested that he ought to do it for the sake of his family. Then Jawarski said: "No. I have lived my life without faith and I am not going to pretend now that I have it." I do not know what his family thought of that. But I am sure God thinks a great deal more of the man who refused to go out of life with a lie on his lips than he does of one who repeats a phrase merely because he has been requested to do it, as a condition of salvaging a reputation ruined by crime, or of gaining entrance into a heaven whose meaning he repudiates.

That, I know, is an extreme illustration. But in its extremity it symbolizes what has happened all about us. Men have repeated the passwords of faith, but have rebelled against the life of faith; have lived at conscienceless ease, have maintained themselves as "persons of substance and repute even at the price of doubtful compromise and concentration on per-

sonal profit," have denied everything that Christ stands for. In a word, while denying Christ they have professed faith in him. They have been less realistic and honorable than the bandit-murderer. The only explanation is that faith has become to them a mere password which they hope to use. And, of course, that is not faith. It is mere confidence in a device. It is really related to the incantations of the witch doctor. It brings the salvation of Jesus down to the level of pow-wowers in York County, Pennsylvania. It is a mere resort to the spell. Faith has nothing to do with devices for outwitting a broken law. It is the answer of the soul to reality and the surrender of life to the laws of reality. It is not credulity; it is critical judgment applied to fact and value.

II

What, then, is faith? At the risk of seeming sophomoric I venture to cite Webster's first and best definition. "Inward acceptance of a personality as real and as trustworthy, of an idea as true and obligatory, or of a thing as beneficial."

The first emphasis I want to lay is upon the first two words, an "inward acceptance." Faith is not an *external* affirmation, but an *inward* one. It is not an inward *compulsion,* but an inward *acceptance.* It is the movement of a free and candid self which is not driven, but inspired, not conquered, but convinced: a movement in answer to a discovery about a person, an idea, a thing.

It differs from knowledge, in the more technical sense, in the range of its observations and in the method of its inductions. Scientific knowledge is built up out of sense data which can be measured by machines. Not all scientists limit themselves to that kind of knowledge. When one of them declares that everything—mother love, Beethoven's symphonies, Raphael's art—can be reduced to motion, he is not uttering scientific knowledge. He is merely declaring his personal inference—and maybe preference. Much that passes to-day for scientific knowledge is merely the beliefs of men who are interested in

science. The two great laws of thermodynamics, namely, (1) "The quantity of force which can be brought into action in the whole of nature is unchangeable"; (2) "While the total energy in the universe is constant, the sum of useful energy is diminishing"—are assumptions rather than absolutely verifiable truths. But they are assumptions necessary to scientific faith nevertheless. The scientist believes in them, not because he has explored the whole universe and measured all its forces, but because when he proceeds on the basis of these assumptions he is getting somewhere in the mastery and understanding of that part of the universe which does come under his observation.

Now, religious faith comes about in much the same way. A man looks out upon the universe. He lives with it. He listens to the testimony of others, in his own and preceding generations, who have lived with it, and he makes up his mind that it is a certain kind of a universe; that it has, say, meaning and purpose; that it is a universe of values as well as of facts; that it is the arena of the Eternal Spirit of Love; that love is the only thing that can have permanent standing in it; that such a universe would not create values to destroy them, and that personal values will live forever. Now, he cannot prove all of these convictions any more than physics can give final proof of the above quoted laws of thermodynamics. But they are convictions born out of the reaction of the universe upon his own soul and the souls of others. They are a faith rising in him as the result of observation and experiment in living. The testimony of others has entered into it, but he has not meekly accepted their testimony without thought and adventure on his own part. He has not strained himself to believe. But while driven to believe, he has been free in believing—just as the man who grasps a red-hot poker is compelled to believe that heat sears, or a man who witnesses Hamlet is compelled to agree that indecision means ruin, yet is free in making his conclusion. The compulsion is the compulsion of fact and of value. It therefore wins an inner and real, not an external and formal acceptance. "Faith," says William Morgan, "is the

soul's everlasting 'Yea' to the divine realities that appeal to it." Until the appeal is made the soul cannot answer. To answer "Yea" when the soul is not stirred is not faith, but hypocrisy. To refuse to answer "Yea" when the soul is appealed to is blasphemy. It is the sin against the Holy Spirit. It is irreverence toward reality. It is the obduracy which says, "Evil, be thou my good; illusion, be thou my truth; ugliness, be thou my beauty." Faith is the answer of the soul to its vision of reality whatever that vision may be. It is something which cannot be imposed from without or worked up from within. It is not a mere *rebound,* but *a reply,* an intelligent and willing reply to discovery and revelation. It cannot be less than that. It cannot be more than that.

III

It is evident, then, that faith implies three things:

1. An objective reality capable of being known by those who have eyes to see, minds to think, hearts to feel. Though the laws of thermodynamics are an exposition of the scientist's faith, they represent an objective reality which no science has wholly compassed, but which has borne its witness to the minds of scientists everywhere. So the laws of the moral and spiritual life, the great array of generally accepted spiritual values, represent an objective reality which has borne its witness to sincere and eager souls everywhere. "A student of the past cannot help being struck by the fact that men are found scattered through different times and countries, living under very different conventions who are nevertheless in virtue of their insight plainly moving toward a common center. So much so that the best books of the world seem to have been written, as Emerson puts it, 'by one all-wise, all-seeing gentleman.'"[1] In other words, there is one objective, universal reality which has revealed itself to the seeing mind in all ages and climes. Science, philosophy, and religion are not the baseless fabric of

[1] Irving Babbit, *Rousseau and Romanticism,* p. 175. Reprinted by permission of the author.

a dream—they are the varied witness to one reality greater than them all.

2. Faith demands attention. Religious reality is not discovered by nor can it disclose itself to one who is absorbed in money-making and power-seeking, nor to one who dawdles along through life in an attitude which virtually says: "If there is a God, let him knock me down. Then I shall believe. Otherwise I shall not bother to look him up." Edison's great discoveries did not come to him while spending his days as a lounger waiting for reality to bowl him over. They came to him while on his feet, mentally as well as physically pursuing the quest for truth in his laboratory. Does any man think the greatest reality of all, the Reality of realities, the Universal Spirit, is going to break down the door of his boudoir and rush in upon him while he slumbers in the bed of moral and spiritual indifference? "Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye search for me with all your heart." If any man will spend as much energy and ability and skill in the effort to discover God as Millikan did in isolating the electron, I would bet my life that he will come across his footsteps and will find that this is a spiritual universe and that there is a Heart which responds to and co-operates with man at his best.

3. Faith demands sincerity. Of course it is implied in his search that man is sincere, that he will not oppose his presumptions to evidence. I am indebted to my esteemed friend, Dr. Lynn Harold Hough for the summary of a story, which appeared some ten years ago, about a young surgeon who had ceased to believe in anything but physical atoms. But every time he was confronted by a real crisis he was forced for the time to assume for a practical purpose the very things he denied theoretically. If a man is in that state of mind, which is so wedded to a theory that it will insist on denying what the real situation demands it to accept, he will of course never discover God. One must place his theories at the mercy of facts. He must be willing and eager to revise his creed in keeping with the stuff of life if ever he is to attain the assurance which will

make him join the multitude who repeat "I believe in God, the Father Almighty" and all the other blessed affirmations which are the exuberant testimony of convinced souls.

Given a man who is earnest about the discovery of the nature of the universe and of the meaning of life, a man who will put mind and heart into his search, who will not only think straight, but live dangerously, and who will sincerely face the results of his thinking and living, and there is little doubt but that he will encounter that which will call out the everlasting "Yea" of his soul.

The place of such faith in the strategy of salvation is apparent. Dwight L. Moody once said: "A great many people think that unbelief is a sort of a misfortune, but do not know, if you will allow me the expression, it is the damning sin of the world to-day." I do not think I mean just what Mr. Moody meant when he uttered that sentence. But I can take over those words of mid-Victorian evangelism without a change, for unbelief simply means that a man has not yet discovered reality, and not having discovered reality he is doomed to friction and frustration and death. Reality must be known and obeyed if there is to be that harmony between it and man which means peace and power and life. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

CHAPTER VIII

DO WE FIGHT ALONE?

I

It is not the corrosive acid of *misuse,* but the rust of *disuse* which has almost ruined the word grace for the purposes of life. It is all but forgotten in the speech of modern religion. Some of us have memories, but they are not pleasant. In our youth we heard grace made the subject of bitter debate between Presbyterian and Methodist. On the one hand we were assured that "grace" was irresistible, that if God chose to bestow his favor upon man, man would by that favor automatically and inescapably be saved. On the other hand the assurance was just as solemnly given that "grace" merely describes a divine offer which man is free to reject. God's omnipotence was not believed to apply to the circle of human life. Man was sovereign in his own sphere and could resist any effort on the part of God to make him good or to endow him with spirituality.

Along with this often heated debate went another. It centered around the idea usually simply expressed thus: "Once in grace always in grace." One group insisted that if God lifted a man out of the sea of sin on to the deck of the good ship Salvation, he was there finally. The other crowd declared that it was quite possible for him to fall overboard or willfully to leap into the smothering surge again.

These debates, though always about grace, were not always full of grace or wisdom. They were often very foolish and very bitter. But they at least kept the word alive. And often there flared forth in sermon and in testimony, in poetry and in song, evidence that something very beautiful, very thrilling and really regenerative had taken place in the life of the preacher, witness, poet, or singer.

But the word has gradually faded out of our speech. It still appears in our hymns and we bow our heads, out of respect if not with personal expectation, as the preacher lifts his hand and utters the old benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." But we seldom hear the word in conversation. Nor has any other come to take its place and to indicate our familiarity with or faith in that for which it once was the symbol.

II

Grace in the New Testament sense meant very simply (1) that God wants to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves; (2) that such doing waits not upon our merit; we cannot earn it; it can come to us only as God's loving endowment; (3) that the secret of receiving it lies, not in a philosophical talent or a mystical temperament, but in personal surrender to it. Whatever anybody thinks about all that to-day, one must be very ignorant of history not to know that it once was considered the very essence of Christianity. The gospel was not a new dialectic nor a new philosophical approach to God: it was the good news of God. It was not a new and more subtle speculation, but a new and thrilling announcement.

1. The characteristic note in the early Christian community was one of exhilaration. The world has never seen anything to equal it. We are often pointed back to the civilization of Greece as a society where, in their love of beauty and their at-homeness with the world, men and women really were happy. But the history of Greece at its best contains no note of triumph like that which sounds through the Gospels and Epistles. Matthew Arnold said it was "the sheer gladness of Christianity that made its fortune." Men might resist the arguments of its pleaders, might be skeptical of its account of history, but they could not escape the impression of inexhaustible joy which possessed the souls of the persecuted victims of a powerful but sorrow-haunted empire.

That joy was the result of a moral experience. It was not

a mere romantic ecstasy. Faust was so romantically attached to the "All-embracer, All-sustainer" that he exhausted metaphors in an attempt to describe the attachment and to magnify God. "Call it Bliss, Heart, Love, God," he cried in his rhapsody, "I have no name for it." But the outcome of his romanticism was the seduction and ruin of Marguerite. The joy of the New Testament was never a mere rhetorical frenzy. It was not a holiday from responsibility. It was a joy arising from a personal transformation which resulted in moral victory. They who had been led astray by their own lusts found their desires leading in the direction of righteousness. Once a prey to temptation, they became its master. Once unable to keep the moral law, they found a creative energy which of itself produced conduct far above the requirements of law.

They seemed even to have had a change of status. Before they had the slave-complex: after, the consciousness of sons of God. Before they felt like aliens, out of place and out of touch with central realities: after, they were citizens, members of the household, with all its rights and privileges, at home with God.

They were conscious too of an immeasurable heightening of intellectual power; aware of a new attitude toward each other. They looked upon each other as members of a new community whose deepest bond is love; a community in which no one should thirst for honor or power, but should actually and joyfully push the other ahead, take the other's burden upon his back; a community organized not to get, but to give; not to rule, but to serve.

They were aware of a new attitude toward the world. They were in the best sense other-worldly. They were not content with life upon the low level of the conventional maxims of their time. They were not interested in the world's prizes of wealth or fame or power. They had a beauty less perishable and more meaningful than the world's sounds and colors. "Oh that someone had told me in my youth," John Ruskin is reported to have said, "when all my heart seemed to be set in

those colors and clouds, that appear for a little while and then vanish away, how little my love of them would serve me, when the silence of lawn and wood in the dews of the morning should be completed: and all my thoughts should be of those whom, by neither, I was to meet no more." These people whose faces look out from the pages of the New Testament were not dependent on the poor ministry of cloud and star and flower, but drew from a world invisible their comfort and found in that world their unquenchable hope. Because that world of eternal reality meant so much to them they were not excited about the pursuits and possessions of this one. They had a bigger world than this little earth-bound realm.

But they did not turn away from this world. They tried to transform it, to make it sharers of that larger world which to them was so real. And they have made this world their eternal debtor. They did not love this world as their contemporaries loved it, to cling to it, to possess it, to exploit it. They loved it as God loved it, to suffer for it and to bring to it a wealth beside which all other treasures paled into insignificance.

2. Now, all this that had happened to them, they said, was something which had been done for them. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." "Having gifts differing according to the measure of the gift of Christ." "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." "By the grace of God I am what I am." Such passages as these are not merely a frequent episode in New Testament writing, but the very epitome of the experience behind the writing. Nowhere is there evident any of that sense of strain and effort which characterizes much of the moral teaching and discipline of our day. Those men never talk of self-culture; they say "ye are God's farm." They do not urge self-development, but write, "It is God who worketh in you." Self-examination gives way before the conception of a God who tries the heart. Self-fulfillment withers before the glorious conception of Christ in whom they are made per-

fect. What has happened to them makes them feel as if they had been born again—a process with which they had as little to do comparatively as with their first entrance into life and by which they had become children of heaven, invested with heavenly resources, immortal as heaven's life.

That is why they were so radiant and so full of song. They had found something which could do for them what they could not do for themselves. They had become something which they never hoped to become. They were empowered to achieve what seemed utterly beyond human might. So here they were triumphant over moral evil, unafraid of adversity, unterrified by death—transcending their foes by a strategy born in the mind of God and executed by the Spirit of God. And they were able to offer this transcendence to their friends, to their neighbors, to chance acquaintances by the way, to every one who would give them an audience, on simple condition of their being willing to receive it and surrender their cramped, defeated lives to the giver of the more abundant life.

No wonder they were jubilant. I sat in a little group the other day where was a man heavily burdened because of a severe deficit in the running expenses of a school where a thousand boys are receiving intellectual and moral equipment for the battle of life. And I saw another man and his wife lift that burden from Stanley Jones' shoulders by pledging him money sufficient to cancel the deficit and maintain the school with its beneficent ministry to the nation and the world. And there was a shine on their faces which spoke of the satisfying bliss that arose in their hearts because they were able to do this beautiful deed and render this magnificent service. I have never coveted wealth; but that day I almost envied them their joy in giving, in making the poor thus rich, in keeping open doors that threatened to close. It was something like the joy we see in the New Testament. Those far-away folk too faced a heavily burdened humanity, a humanity that was threatened with moral and spiritual bankruptcy, unable to meet its confessed moral obligations, to buy bread for its hungers, clothing

for its nakedness, fire for its cold and cheerless hearthstones. And they were able to meet that poverty of life with abundance. "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." No wonder, I say, that they were happy, sang songs in the desolate Roman night, counted themselves fortunate bringers of good news, and asked no reward save the joy of telling.

III

At its heart Christianity is the story of grace, of God doing something for man, offering strength for weakness, wisdom for folly, righteousness for sin, victory for defeat. Forget that grace and the Christianity you have left is a poor mutilated affair. Humanism represents a noble effort of the human spirit; Christianity stands for the reception by the human spirit of that which purges effort from strain and quickens it for achievement. Humanism limits the resources of man to "nature" and to himself; Christianity looks beyond nature and beyond man to a self-giving God. You may not believe in grace, but do not eliminate it and call the residue Christianity. That residue may still exalt the principles of Jesus, but it has forgotten the meaning of Jesus. It may keep him as a religious romance, but it loses him as an effective redeemer. Christianity stands for a new life, born of God, sustained by God, at home in the larger moral sphere, gifted with unique spiritual enthusiasms and insights. That is history. Whether you think those early Christians were deceived or not, that is what they believed had happened to themselves and might happen to anybody who was willing to have it happen.

2. My conviction is that they were not deceived. A man went away from hearing one of my sermons not long ago, saying, "That preacher is simply an old-fashioned Methodist who tries to cover up his tracks with modern scientific verbiage." I am not aware of trying to cover up anything let alone indulge

in scientific verbiage in the effort at concealment. I am trying to speak in the vocabulary of my time—how else can my time catch my meaning? If by "old-fashioned Methodist," that man means that I believe in the reality of that experience of early Christianity which John Wesley recovered for the dead churches of England, then I plead guilty. For this is my solemn yet jubilant conviction: God waits to do for man what he cannot do for himself, and the supreme value of Christianity is that the Person at the center of it, in his life and death and final triumph, is the effective medium through which God is able to realize his gracious purpose for us and in us and through us.

IV

The objections to such a conviction are, it seems to me, ill considered.

1. To assume that whatever issues from a life happens purely because of what man is in himself is to forget the profoundest psychological fact, namely, the influence of environment in making character. It is by the grace of our parents, the grace of our early associates, the grace of our teachers, the grace of the social order with its government and industry that we are what we are. The self-made man is a phantasy. He does not exist. If it were possible for a babe to grow up from birth on an uninhabited island in the Pacific, he would scarce be a human being. He would have no language, no ethical code, no moral ideals, no notion of the meaning of life, nothing more than a nature-religion, if he had that. He would be almost an animal. The difference between such a man and yourself is written in terms of what your environment has done for you. Beethoven said to Lichnowsky: "Prince, what you are you are by the accident of birth. What I am, I am of myself." As a contrast between the achievements of the musician and the inheritance of a mere title that sentence was well uttered. But as a statement of absolute independence it was foolish, as such statements always are. Every honest

man must say, "By the grace of my environment I am what I am." We all recognize that, if we are capable of recognizing truth. Where we fail in our thinking is in the limitation of our environment. We assume that nature and man tell the whole story. We take a small section of the universe and say, "That is my environment," and we choose to forget all the rest. The Christian doctrine of grace is simply a recognition that life is not thus necessarily narrowly fenced in, while the totality of the universe is thus summarily fenced out. It says, God is that largest environment of the soul; man can choose to live in a narrow one or a larger or the largest; if he opens his life to the influence of the largest environment, God, his life will become what it otherwise could not be.

I am aware that such language seems a bit unreal at first. God as the largest environment of the soul does not awaken an immediate image in the mind. The rest of our environment in nature and human society is made vivid to us by our senses. But who has sensed God? However, go back again to the conception outlined in the earlier chapters where God was pictured as the Ultimate Reality, in whose life nature and man alike have their source and sustenance. All things are in him, and yet he is above and beyond all in the infinite resources of his own being. In a sense none of us can escape him, for consciously or unconsciously we draw our very breath in him. Even Herbert Spencer, who frequently applied the adjective "unknowable" to God, goes on to say: "The Power manifested throughout the universe, distinguished as material, is the same Power which in ourselves *wells up under the form of consciousness.*" We are in God and God is in us.

What the idea of grace involves, then, is a recognition of God as the environment of the soul, an environment which we cannot escape, but also an environment whose infinite resources we have only touched and which invites us to open our souls to its larger and larger aspects, so that in our increasing reception of and fellowship with him we become increasingly "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1. 4). "Let him learn,"

said Emerson in his lecture on Montaigne, "that he is here not to work, but to be worked upon." That is not fanaticism. It is the only wisdom.

2. The second objection to the doctrine of grace is that it is immoral; it teaches the soul to depend on God and destroys self-reliance and responsibility. Immanuel Kant declared that every kind of dependence on another, whether man or God, is moral flaccidity, and that to pray for help even in bitter moral battle is to endanger our moral integrity. He would leave us with no choice save between moral integrity through self-dependence on one hand and moral infantilism through dependence on divine grace on the other. It is a false dilemma. We can be morally responsible and divinely supported at the same time. The youth who seeks an education is not turned away from college with a warning that it is disgraceful to seek help in the growing of a mind and with the injunction to find truth alone and acquire the art of thinking unaided. The man who knocks at the door of a woman's heart and urges in his own behalf that he cannot live without her is not upbraided by society, much less by the object of his courtship, on the score that if he would be a man he must go it alone. We know better. We know that absolute independence is an impossibility and that the more one can share the fullness of another's life the more likely is he to develop a true life of his own. Manhood comes not in isolation, but in fellowship; not in independence, but in co-operation. The Christian doctrine of grace is the doctrine of fellowship and co-operation with a self-giving God. It does not portray the soul as a helpless baby in the grip of God. Rather does it say: "Cling to him and he will carry you. Put forth your strength and you will receive his. Exert your will and you will find the co-operation of the will divine. Use your intelligence and divine wisdom shall be added." God's relation to the soul is not that of a stream of electricity poured through a motor. It is a personal relation; never violating personality nor overriding it, but eliciting its highest powers by revealing to it his own truth and beauty.

That is why the grace of God is called the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is in Christ that we have our best disclosure of God. In him that total environment becomes concrete and vivid before our eyes. We know at a glance—and the longer we ponder the better we know—what God is: love, eternal, unquenchable, unadulterated sacrificial love. In the Greek mystery religions the neophytes were taken behind closed doors, taught secret truths, had enacted before them dramatic spectacles which did in a measure purge the soul of the spectator and beget new desires within. Paul was thinking of those mysteries when he wrote in 1 Cor. 3. 16 a passage which we might paraphrase thus: "We Christians have our drama too, a drama of God in redemptive action, manifest in the flesh, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." He is saying in that graphic metaphor, that it is the vision of God in Christ which achieves in us the purpose of grace by awakening in our hearts that response to God's character and will which gives God his supreme opportunity with us and in us. Centuries of life have confirmed that utterance. Out of every condition of life in every century since the first, men and women, to whom the drama of redemption has unfolded God's love toward them, God's purpose in them, have been lifted out of their old selves and have

> "Marched on spotless, clad in raiment new.
> The lame were straightened, withered limbs uncurled
> And blind eyes opened on a sweet new world."[1]

3. In an age when psychoanalysis is achieving interesting and sometimes remarkable results in the recreating of individuals it may seem strange there has been until now no formal attempt to link the creative and redemptive values of psychology with the Christian experience of grace. What has been written in these chapters on faith and grace is the result of con-

[1] Vachel Lindsay, *Collected Poems*, p. 124. The Macmillan Company, publishers. Reprinted by permission.

victions which have not only survived, but have grown stronger with the fascinating revelations of modern psychology. The discoveries of psychology are only disclosing certain fundamental laws of personal integration which religion has long ago though perhaps unwittingly used. Practically every cure of sick souls achieved through psychoanalysis can be matched by cures which have come about as the result of a faith which has restored confidence to the selves "consciously divided, inferior and unhappy," has furnished that center of reassociation and reintegration without which mere psychic analysis is a futile procedure, and has "closed the circuit" whereby the split-personality has been fused into a victorious and happy whole.

4. Due recognition must be made of the paralyzing and disintegrating power of the wretched complexes with which popular psychology has made us all familiar. Undoubtedly, the process of salvation may be helped by the careful "deep analysis" which releases the self from the grip of these demons of the unconscious and makes it possible to throw the total personality open to that Eternal Reality which surrounds us all, which is eager to make that revelation of itself which gives birth to faith, and which seeks evermore to enrich us with its gracious gifts. But where psychology does its best there is still a demand for those processes which I have described in these chapters on faith and grace. Experts in the field of practical psychoanalysis have assured the writer again and again that they are practically helpless in the remaking of a tangled self unless the patient has a solid background of religious faith. "The more experience I get of the various types of neurotic trouble," writes a distinguished psychologist, "the more knowledge of the inner processes by which the soul is built up, the more I marvel at the grace of God; the more I feel the hopelessness of man without it and the more I realize the need in our churches for a message which is a gospel."[2] The psychiatrist is a valuable ally, but in most cases is not indispensable.

[2] John G. Mackenzie, *Souls in the Making*, p. 256. The Macmillan Company, publishers. Reprinted by permission.

The "acceptance of God in Christ," with all that it implies in repentance and faith, exercises a transforming influence which delivers the self from the tyranny of the worst of complexes and furnishes that Ideal for which the psychologist seeks and which through the centuries has demonstrated its power to take over and satisfy the instincts as it sublimates them for the pursuit of ends which are spiritual and eternal.

Perhaps the greatest assault made upon the idea of grace has been in the hasty assumption that what has hitherto been accepted as the operation of divine grace, has in reality been only the summoning of one's own reserves by the process of autosuggestion. A deeper study of the methods and especially of the results of mere autosuggestion lends less plausibility to that assumption. There is such a contrast between the mood of prayer and the mood of autosuggestion that the moment one becomes suspicious that he is only indulging in reflective suggestion that moment does prayer become impossible. One cannot consciously carry on autosuggestion under the guise of prayer any more than he can continue a conversation on the telephone after he learns that the line is disconnected. There may be some value in talking to oneself, but a monologue isn't a conversation. Neither is autosuggestion, prayer. Any one who has ever flung himself out upon divine grace knows that the mental attitude involved is quite different from that which is employed in keying up the self to new endeavors.

And the result is entirely different! The practice of autosuggestion increases the suggestibility of the patient—a most undesirable event. The practice of prayer and the experience of grace fortify one against the influence of suggestion and strengthen the conative or volitional aspects of the soul. While sharing the fellowship of the Eternal, one becomes more truly and triumphantly himself and moves amidst the doubting multitudes

> "Dumb to their scorn and turning on their laughter
> Only the dominance of earnest eyes."

CHAPTER IX

RELIGION AND CONDUCT

I

PERHAPS there are some of my readers who would disavow that morality is one of the words of religion. You think that one can be moral without being religious, or religious without being moral. In a sense you are right. There have been very religious people who have seemed to be utterly devoid of moral sense. You may recall the picture of the Duke of Milan, in Merejowski's Leonardo Da Vinci, bowing before his ikon in long and delectable prayer, but at that very time conscious of having obtained his throne by fraud, plotting against his nephew the true heir, anticipating further deeds of violence, rising from his knees to solicit the first beautiful woman he encounters, his ethical loyalties in inverse ratio to his religious fervor.

We all know people who are acutely moral in their insights and attitudes, but who seem to be absolutely devoid of religion. They have a conscience about their relationships with their fellow men, but none about their relationships to God. They do not believe that there is a God. They see outside of humanity nothing but impersonal energy. Toward that they confess no feeling of reverence. The psychologist describes their reactions when he declares "there is not always a point to point correspondence between genuine feelings of religion and genuine feelings of morality."

But a morality that is more than an observance of the mores, the customs and rules of the tribe, must be religious at its foundations. If a man believes that he lives in a universe of blind force, he must, with Bertrand Russell, pit his Ideals against Power and make war upon the universe in order to sustain within it the Ideals which he cherishes. Even so there is something quite akin to religion in his reverence for the

collective and personal ideals to which he owns such a costly allegiance. And if he thinks of the universe as an immutable order which it is folly to attempt to escape, then his morality is an effort to live in accordance with the nature of things, to live as a man must live in order to get on in this kind of a universe. He looks beyond his immediate act to the universal order and, when he tells the truth or performs a beautiful service, he virtually says: "This is what the universe, as I know it, demands of me." In so far as he does that he is religious; he is expressing a conviction about and assuming an attitude toward the larger world of Reality. He is "looking up," and the man who does that is religious whether he admits it or not.

And if morality at its best is inseparably bound up with religious attitudes, the Christian religion has always put morality at its very heart. The profoundest and most searching thing which can be said on that point appears in the words of Jesus: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," and in that other word of John's: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" If religion means an attitude of reverence and love for God, the eternal spiritual reality, it inevitably demands reverence and love for that part of reality nearest to one, namely, his fellow man. To be indifferent to your next-door neighbor while claiming an interest in God is like avowing a passion for music, but being indifferent to a Beethoven sonata or a Brahms symphony or a MacDowell lyric or any other particular piece of music. If you are really fond of music, you are interested in individual examples of music; and if you are really loyal to reality, you are loyal to every fragment of reality with which you must deal. Religion, as Jesus conceived it, and immorality are glaring and grotesque contradictions.

II

Morality is, therefore, one of the words of religion. To be a good Christian you must be a good man. But here is where

our trouble begins. What is it to be good? In what does genuine morality consist? Once again we are face to face with the degradation of a noble word.

1. Often morality has been debased into a synonym for convention and custom. Men and women alike acquiesce in the standards of their set and are therefore considered moral. They run their business according to policies in vogue among other members of their crowd; they conduct their professions in harmony with the general practice; they accept the social duties prescribed by their club or clique; they conform and call that conformity morality. The other day Mr. Ford was made the subject of extensive eulogy. On the one hand, stories were told of the sentimental side of his life; how when the corner stone was laid at the Memorial Building which he has erected in Dearborn, he had Mr. Edison walk across the soft cement in order that those footprints might be preserved longer than the pyramids of Egypt; how he persuaded Mr. Edison to write his name in that same soft cement in letters a foot high; how he sank into that same soft cement a shovel that had been the working tool of Luther Burbank—every deed one of sentiment. On the other hand, the eulogist confessed the "hard-boiled" methods in evidence in the Ford factories, methods, I may say, that sent one of the greatest spirits in the American pulpits home from an inspection tour of the Ford plant to cry like a child over the "efficiency" which drove the toiler at a pace which only youth can endure. And this contradictory combination, sentiment toward his friends and strictest exaction toward the multitude, was made the theme of glowing and commendatory eloquence. Only a habit of thinking which confuses convention and morality could ever prompt or even permit such an utterance or make possible the policy which it attempted to justify. Our Detroit friend is not selected because he is a conspicuous offender, but because he is merely an illustration of a rather common tendency to assume that one is being completely moral when he is not violating the common practices of the day. Men are sentimental toward

their friends and stoical toward their employees, and see no incongruity therein because they are not looking into the matter, but are looking at the accepted standards of their own crowd. A well-known psychologist who has had opportunity for observation declares that the blood-thirsty head-hunter of Borneo can be frequently seen sitting "all day at home tenderly nursing his infant in his arms." We smile at the inconsistency written all over that picture. We would laugh out loud, or more likely weep violently at equally glaring moral contradictions in our own lives, if we were delivered from the snare of convention long enough to make a genuine moral examination of our conduct.

2. Obedience to external law has often been accepted as the moral life. Sometimes that law has been promulgated by the state, sometimes written in a scripture, sometimes affirmed by the church. But whatever or whoever is the author of the law, no one who has any understanding of the nature of the moral life can be content with mere obedience to the law. In the first place, no law or set of laws has ever been written which covers more than a fraction of all those situations which a man must meet and whose solution reveals whether he is moral or immoral. The American Tobacco Company is spending millions in an effort to persuade the women of America to become cigarette smokers by advertisements which read, "I know a way to keep from getting fat—reach for a —— instead of a sweet." The appeal of that advertisement to the American woman with her present obsession for slenderness is apparently overwhelming. Lovely American girls are saturating themselves with nicotine. Expectant mothers are pouring nicotine through the bloodstream into the helpless bodies of their unborn babes. The charm of womanhood is desecrated to make of her an altar upon which is burning, night and day, defiling, but profitable incense to the glory of the Tobacco Trust. No statutory law could ever be written against such infamous publicity; no church law has been written against it; and, of course, the New Testament says nothing about it, for

while in those far days Christian women were threatened by the lions of the arena and by the soldiers of bloody Nero, they were at least safe from billboards and tobacco. Some regard for the principle of truth and for the survival of beauty and for the health of womanhood and childhood would demand a different course, but as far as any law is concerned there is, and I suppose always will be, silence. And so the president of the American Tobacco Company, measuring himself by formal law, can write unctuous words of moral self-complacency about his "interest in the community." There is nothing more immoral than a morality which builds itself upon external law. The supreme duty of life is to discover duty—and not to peruse codes.

Even if it were possible to write laws for every moral situation or to find a law applying to the situation immediately confronting one, mere obedience, however complete, would not make one moral. I am acting morally when I am convinced of the rightness of an action and do it because I see that it is right, because I am aware of its moral value. If I obey law merely because I am afraid not to, afraid either of the lash of God or the contempt of my fellow men, I am a mere slave. If I obey merely because I am too lazy to inquire into the merit of law and decide whether it deserves my obedience, I am a mere puppet. Morality begins only when there is an insight into moral values, a clear sense of right or wrong and surrender to the right. To consecrate oneself to a course of conduct which his conscience does not approve, under the idea that God demands such a consecration, is to degrade religion and destroy morality.

3. But once again even conscience, in itself, cannot insure morality. The man who follows his conscience is real, but he is often mistaken. Paul casting Christian men and women into prison because they believed in Jesus was just as conscientious as Paul going to prison himself for believing in Jesus. But no one would say that the morality of his earlier deed was on the level with that of his later one. Canon Streeter, addressing

himself to the society matron, said: "You, madam, possess a tongue and are not unpracticed in using it. You have a vote too now. And if you will face up to the futility of and pluck up courage simply to leave undone two thirds of what heretofore you have taken for granted are your 'social duties,' you will find the time for some of the many kinds of that unpaid work which, because socially creative, is a real duty. Incidentally, this will effect a reduction in your dress bill. Give half of what you save to the League of Nations Union. The League may not be able to prevent another war, but with proper backing it has a sporting chance and you will have done your bit."[1]

Granted that Canon Streeter's society matron is probably very conscientious in the performance of her "social duties," what her conscience needs is an awakening to larger duties, real duties. Such an awakening would lead her to a use of her money and time which any of us who are sufficiently detached will immediately recognize as being infinitely more moral than her present "conscientious" practice. Your conscience is like your eyes—in need of education. You do not see merely by opening your eyes; you see by being taught how and what to see. You may open your eyes in the woods and call your sight vision. But let a geologist stand by your side and teach you how to look at the rocks under your feet; let a botanist stand by your side and teach you how to look at the flowers nestling on yonder sunny slope; let a bird lover stand by your side and teach you how to look at the feathered beauties that leap from limb to limb or fly from tree to tree and across the arching sky; let the astronomer stand by your side and teach you how to look between the lace work of branches and twigs and leaves toward the infinite spaces, and you will discover that you haven't been seeing at all—you have just been blinking at the universe. And if your eyes do not see merely by opening them, neither does your conscience become aware of right

[1] *Adventure*, p. 77, The Macmillan Company, publishers. Reprinted by permission.

and wrong merely by being set in action. It too needs training. It too must be taught where to look and how!

III

If morality is not obedience to custom nor to external law nor to the untutored conscience, what, then, is it? Is it doing right because its intrinsic rightness is seen and loved? Is it the soul's loyalty to the best? Well and good! But what is right? What is the best? Sometimes men confronted by theological debate or by philosophic speculation turn away in weariness and say: "Of what value is all this talk about matters which cannot finally be made the subject of proof? Why not do right and let it go at that?" And they say that as if they were inviting you to come out of the woods, where you are bound to get lost, on to the open and straight highway, where you could not possibly get lost if you tried. But if anyone were to obey the summons and leave the tangled woods of theology and philosophy, he would find that he had stepped not into a clearing, but into a denser forest, where, in addition to all the confusion he had found before, were swampy places in which some hapless wayfarers have lost their lives and many have contracted fever and ague.

There is apparent agreement about many abstract moral ideas, but on concrete instances of the application of the idea there is disagreement almost everywhere. Ask the average man if he thinks it is wrong to steal and he will say "Yes" very quickly. But Mr. Rockefeller asks the stock holders of the Standard Oil Company if it is wrong to form a trading company in order to mulct the parent company of profits in a gigantic deal; and while, thank God, the majority said "Yes" very loudly, there were enough of them who said "No" to make everybody uneasy until the vote was finally counted. If you ask almost anybody whether or not lax sex relations are to be condemned, they will say "Yes" at once. But when you get beyond the general statement to specific incidents, there is almost hopeless confusion again. No less a journal than the

Nation, in a recent editorial, wants to know "whether the church or the younger generation is to determine what constitutes laxity." Everybody believes in truth, but there seems to be considerable difference of opinion when it comes to telling the truth in the sick room or on the advertising page, at the marriage altar or in the pulpit.

Our judgment of what is right is always determined by our scale of values. Some have valued happiness above all things and have therefore praised whatever has increased the sum of human happiness. Others have set great store by the laws of thought. Logic is their God and the syllogism is his prophet. Behaviorists count the world's chief prize "varied and long-continued activity" and would determine all conduct by its relation to such activity.

Criticism of such criteria is easy and familiar to the most of us. What makes a man happy depends upon which kind of a person he is, upon his character. The happiness of Charles Lindbergh requires quite a different line of conduct than the happiness of "Scarface" Capone. The pursuit of happiness has landed as many in the pigsty as in paradise, and it seems almost childish in the presence of some values which life offers us. Thomas Carlyle said it all years ago in *Sartor Resartus:* "Foolish soul! What act of legislature was there that thou shouldest be happy? . . . There is in man a Higher than Love of Happiness; he can do without Happiness, and instead thereof find Blessedness! Was it not to preach forth this same Higher that sages and martyrs, the Poet and the Priest, in all times, have spoken and suffered; bearing testimony, through life and through death, of the Godlike that is in Man, and how in the Godlike only has he Strength and Freedom?" Leslie Stephen shattered the claim of logical consistency as a norm of conduct when he said that it left, as the only reason why a man should abstain from breaking his wife's head, the declaration that "it was a way of denying that she was his wife." Whatever a moralist may think about that, one may be sure that the unfortunate wife, nursing her broken

head and her broken heart, would scarcely be content with such an estimate of the moral situation. The "varied and long continued activity" of the Behaviorists cannot explain our conviction that when a scholar lays down his life to save a "river-rat" a noble deed has been done. The activity that perishes is greater than the activity that survives, and yet we all believe that the scholar did right. There is something, after all, that we value more than "varied and long-continued activity."

IV

All of this is the repetition of mere commonplace to students of ethics, but has been briefly set down here in order to introduce us to the contribution which Jesus made to the problem of the moral life. He did not attempt to settle all questions of right and wrong. He was at a far remove from the multiplied moral dictums of the Mishna and Gemara, or from the precepts of a Mohammed, or from the casuistry of the Roman Church. He set down as the supreme value the will of God. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." "When ye pray, say, . . . Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." He then proposed to help men fall in love with the Will which had held his own life in glorious thrall. To that end he proclaimed the possibility of a new birth whereby men became new creatures whose supreme affection was toward God and their fellow men. And having men and women in whose hearts was a passion for the discovery of God's will, he proposed to turn them loose in the world to discover what that will is for every relationship of life.

Now, what does all this mean in the terms with which this book ought by this time to have made us familiar? It means, first of all, a confidence in the universe; a faith that it belongs to God, reveals God, so that he who will walk abroad with his eyes open will discover God; a faith that such discovery and consequent obedience to its revelations will give a meaning, a richness and intensity to life which cannot be had in any other

way; a faith, therefore, that the universe is not to be outwitted, but explored and understood and obeyed!

It means, in the second place, that Christian morality is an adventure, that only by experiment in living will we discover what the will of God, the character of the universe, demands of us. Many such experiments have been made and their results are recorded in the moral codes with which we are all familiar, and especially in certain deeply rooted convictions about truth and honor and love and respect for personality. These are neither irrational taboos nor pious guesses, but the accumulated inferences of centuries of wrestling with life. We scorn them at our peril. But while many discoveries have been made, experimenting is not at an end. No one who has any conception of the inexhaustible character of the universe or any realization of the sorry mess which most humans, even the best of us, are still making of life, imagines for a moment that we have yet discovered all that life might be in such a universe.

A true morality must therefore make room for fresh experiments in order that men and women may penetrate into the secrets hitherto hidden from timid and blundering souls. In economic and political and social life encouragement should be given to those who, refusing to be bound by tradition, insist on taking risks for the sake of that larger life for themselves and their fellows which they believe a divine universe will provide.

Such experiments are, of course, fraught with danger. They are not enterprises for fools or for those who are seeking mere license or for those born rebels who have no joy unless they are setting off a bomb in the parlor or "heaving dead cats into the sanctuary." For that reason Jesus here seems to us to have made a real contribution to the moral life of the world. He proposed to set his followers out upon an adventure, but it was not an adventure in the sense of a "plunge." It was the adventure of men who as the result of a new birth go out with a passion to discover what harmony with the Universal Will requires of them in all the relationships of life; the ad-

venture of men who believe that in Christ the universe reveals its elemental character to be love, and that by loyalty to that character, they might best discern its manifold requirements in all the multiplied phases of daily endeavor.

What such loyalty would demand of them and of us, in every instance, Jesus did not say. But he believed, and I believe, that moral truth is harmony with the Universal Will and is to be found, not by slavish obedience to rules, but by the lives of men and women whose "hearts are right" and who are imbued with a passion to discover what a loving Universal Will would have done.

This is at once the freest and most searching ethic in the world. Under its regime no mediæval duke or modern office-holder could seize and hold power for selfish gain; no Palestinian plutocrat or American millionaire could look at his pile and say: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up in store for many years. Take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry." No matron in Jerusalem or in Pittsburgh could surrender the social values inherent in her womanhood to the tyranny of her frivolous and selfish clique. No employer in the field of Israel or the mills of Pennsylvania could withhold a living wage from those who sweat and strain at his enterprise. No one in any age or clime could be content with a social order where poverty and ignorance deface and destroy the image of God stamped upon the souls of men. A thousand practices which are taken for granted among us would end to-morrow if we who call ourselves Christians would think of life as a great adventure in behalf of Eternal Love and in the exploration of its earthly meanings.

There are many situations where technical skill will be needed to discover such meanings. Adequate and transforming treatment of the criminal must await the findings of psychology. The annihilation of poverty and a juster distribution of wealth will proceed only on the path marked out by sound economics. The reformation of city government in America will be achieved only by those who are skilled in practical politics as

well as in political theory. International peace must depend upon adequate machinery for the settlement of disputes. In a word, the statesman, the politician, the industrialist, the business man, the social worker cannot trust to a mere sentiment to help him discover what a Christian ethic demands of him. Uninformed good will might easily play havoc in a social situation and become thus positively immoral by its defeat of the Universal Good Will. Science must contribute what it knows of the nature of things and of men to any effort which we make to explore in order to understand and to serve. Our new adventures in behalf of a larger life for ourselves and the race must be more than the impulsive quest of unintelligent geniality.

But as good will cannot get very far without knowledge, neither will technique get on in the right direction without a guiding passion. The significance of the gospel of Jesus for the problem of ethics is that it offers to supply that passion. It proposes to men that they live in spiritual company with Jesus, believing that out of that association will come such an integration of personality that the central love of God and of man which characterized him will possess and rule them, and that under the control of such love human life has its greatest opportunity to make those discoveries which will enable it to harmonize itself with the Universal Will and thus to become completely moral.

CHAPTER X

HAVE WE ANY WORD FROM GOD?

I

More than forty times does the phrase "word of God" appear in the New Testament. Many times it represents some utterance of Jesus. But its use is by no means confined to a description of what he said. It also defines an utterance of John the Baptist and his predecessors the prophets and the apostles and the members of the early church. It represents a conviction on the part of the writers of the New Testament that God is not enveloped in eternal silence, but has spoken to the minds of men in such fashion that they were sure God, and not their own fancy, was the author of the word. They made no such assumptions concerning much that was said even by the best of them. Paul clearly differentiates between his opinions and the word begotten within him.[1] There were many debates in the early church on questions of doctrines and of practice even among the apostles themselves, but seldom was there such unanimity as would have resulted if they had all heard one authoritative word. Paul at least once had to tell Peter to go away back and sit down. But in spite of their uncertainties, of this they were very certain—that once and again they had heard the very word of God for their particular situation, personal, social, ecclesiastical.

Their faith that God had spoken has continued down the years. It is a faith much abetted by the human longing for assurance and guidance. A dear old radio friend whose face I had never seen, but whose charm of spirit had reached me across the hills and valleys which separate us, said to me in a recent letter, "I wanted an infallible book to guide me." We

[1] 1 Cor. 7.

all have a craving for certainty about some matters of grave importance. We are willing to face many hazards and risk the investment of our lives in enterprises that represent only a sublime hope for humanity. But about a few matters, at least about the friendliness of the universe and the divinity of life itself, we are eager for some authoritative confirmation. There are perplexing and even crucial decisions which we are compelled to make. The issues are so great that we hesitate to jeopardize them by a mere guess. How wonderful it would be if we could meet them, not with a human conjecture, but with a divine certainty. A great and good friend of mine told a group of us the other day how he was brought face to face with a challenge and an opportunity whose outcome might decide the fate of a multitude, and how, while disclaiming in his own mind any faith in the magical power of the Bible to open itself and to thrust its meaning upon him, he nevertheless turned to the New Testament and permitted himself to be guided by the first verse upon which his eyes rested. Some of us are not so sure that he was divinely guided that day, but we can all appreciate the urgency which drove him to cast about for an inerrant word. There are situations so fraught with possibilities for good or ill, and in whose presence we feel so utterly incompetent, that our desperation fairly shrieks aloud for God to bow the heavens and come down.

II

Has there ever been, is there now a divine response to this longing for assurance and guidance? Did anybody ever hear a word of God? Can anybody hear it now?

The presumption is in behalf of an affirmative answer to these questions. If there is a God, if this universe is a unity as I have tried to affirm everywhere in this book, if man is an organic part of this unity, then certainly there ought to be no insuperable difficulty in the way of intercommunication between the whole and the part, between man and God. Immanuel Kant with his philosophical dualism separated the uni-

verse into two detached spheres: the phenomenal, things-as-they-appear, which (he said) is all we can ever know; the noumenal, things-as-they-are, which (he said) we can never know. God, he placed among the noumenal and declared we can never know him; we can only *infer* him. In Kant's wake came Hamilton, who declared that even "science is at its best the reflection of a reality we cannot know," "we embrace a cloud for divinity." Following Hamilton, Spencer crowned the inevitable agnosticism of this epistemological division of the universe into man the unknowing knower and the reality the unknowable, by declaring it as "alike our highest wisdom and our highest duty to regard that through which all things exist as the Unknowable."

That philosophical dualism, as far as some of us are concerned, is as dead as Rameses. A sounder method of thinking recognizes that man is not an excrescence upon the universe, something obtruded into it from nowhere, a total stranger to it, but, rather, is a part of the universe, its child, its noblest creation. "What we have to deal with," says Pringle-Pattison, "is a continuous manifestation of a single Power, whose full nature cannot be identified with the initial stage of the evolutionary process, but can only be learned from the course of the process as a whole and most fully from its final stages."[2] In a word, man does not stand outside looking in. He stands at the climax of a continuous process. His specifically human experiences, moral and religious as well as intellectual, are themselves a product of reality and therefore a revelation of reality. They are not "the illusory product of his hopes and fears," they are the *effect* in him which is the proof of the character of the creative whole. If the reader desires more explicit statement of man's intimate relation to the Real, he is counselled to buy Professor Seth Pringle-Pattison's great work, *The Idea of God.* Do not buy it if you are looking for cozy afternoons in the hammock of literature. But if you are willing to make the stiff journey up the hill of sound argument

[2] *The Idea of God,* p. 212.

until at last you stand on the summit of a great and commanding conviction concerning man's place in the universe and his certainty of God, then buy and read and thank God for this great Scot from Edinburgh.

And if the philosophical presumption in favor of man's hearing a word from God is strong, the moral one is still stronger. We are certain, because life has made us certain, that self-giving is the only truly moral attitude. We cannot abide the thought of the man who is always running about with his little water-bucket, crowding others aside in his selfish eagerness to secure his pailful of water of life, but never carrying so much as a cup of cold drink to wet the parched lips of some sufferer who lies fainting by the road. That man may call his quest for water religious, and his gladness at the sight of his own full pail the joy of the Lord, but we know that he is not even moral, and that unless he himself becomes a fountain of life to others, his soul will turn into a brackish, slimy pool which no selfish stirring can make sweet again. Frances E. Willard told about a spiritual renewal which came to her, which instead of sharing with others, she hugged to her own bosom as her own precious secret. But one day when she turned inward to enjoy, she found it was not there. Keeping it, she lost it. *Noblesse oblige.* Knowledge is morally bound to give itself to ignorance, wealth to bestow itself upon poverty, virtue to shed its challenging ray into the haunts of vice. Unless they do, life permeates them with dry rot, converts them into a repugnance to possessor and beholder alike. Of that we are sure. Can we be less sure that the divine life must be generous in its beneficence? Must not eternal truth give itself to human ignorance, eternal wealth bestow itself upon human poverty, eternal virtue shed its redemptive rays into areas of human sin? Could God be moral, that is, could he be God, and dwell in the self-contained sufficiency of his own glory? Is there not an inherent contradiction in the very idea of divine aloofness? Can we even conceive of an Infinite Life apart from manifestations in and to finiteness?

III

A true philosophy and a true ethic, then, teach us to expect some word from God. Where shall we look for it? Here our trouble often begins and here have arisen those affirmations which have spoiled "the word of God" for us. Too many times have we been glibly and authoritatively assured that this and this and this is the word of God, when the hopes and expectations aroused in us by the contemplation of Jesus Christ have indignantly repudiated the proffered word. And too often what has commended itself to a conscience, quickened and enlightened by the cross, as the sure word of God to our own times has been denounced as only ill-advised conjecture.

1. Candor compels the admission that the phrase "word of God" has often been too inclusive. An utterance of Jesus, torn from its context, has sometimes been quoted as the word divine when the manner of its use has made it a devilish word. I heard a distinguished writer not long ago, in a paper written in defense of war as an instrument of national policy, repeat the words of Jesus, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one," as a divine pronouncement in favor of the use of weapons. If anybody will read that whole paragraph from which this sentence was taken, with its final despairing gesture, "it is enough," he will discover that Jesus was not advocating, but repudiating arms as a means of achieving his dream for humanity. The savant had in quoting the very words of Jesus destroyed the divine meaning which was theirs. And he was not a sinner above all other Galilæans and Americans who can quote Jesus upon every occasion with seeming pertinence, but with actual impertinence if not blasphemy.

Temporal deliverances for specific situations have been stretched into eternal pronouncements valid for all time. Paul told the woman to keep silence in the churches, and for long centuries that was accepted as the word of God upon the matter of female speech in ecclesiastical assemblies. But even the Presbyterian women of Philadelphia are lifting their protest

against the assumption that Paul here uttered the word of God for our time. In a letter to Timothy advice was given that he drink no longer water, but use a little wine for his stomach's sake. It is terrifying to note how many people have developed stomach trouble in recent years and how Saint Paul has suddenly become the patron saint of the Association Opposed to Prohibition. There are many of us, however, who do not accept his exhortations as a divine prescription for digestive disorders.

Ancient views on matters known only to modern science have been claimed as the word of God, because they appear in the Sacred Writings. Since the birth of modern science some religious men in every generation have felt compelled to raise a battle cry because what they had assumed God had written in a book was in conflict with what science declared he had written on the rocks. But even such an ultraconservative as Dean Gray, of Moody Bible Institute, recognizes that that position is no longer tenable. While claiming inspiration for all the writers of the book, he declares that their inspiration was limited to making a true *record* of untrue scientific opinions, medical theories, and the like. He says the Book contains "some statements that are only partially true and some that are altogether false."[3]

Divine authority has been claimed for acts which, according to a sensitized Christian conscience, are plainly immoral; as when Saul marched out to slay all the men and women and children of a neighboring people, or when the author of the one hundred and ninth psalm poured out its vengeful imprecations.

Not everything that has been described as the word of God, is. The sooner we become frank enough to recognize this conclusion of our best intellectual and moral insights the more speedy and complete will be our emancipation from some of the blinding tyrannies which have but prolonged confusion in

[3] *Deadline of Doctrine*, p. 2.

our individual and social life, and the more certain will be our discovery of what is the true word of God for us.

2. Much that has not been recognized as such is the word of God. It is not limited to the narrow precincts where our false notions have thought to imprison it. Paul recognized that when he wrote: "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." Thomas Carlyle, catching at the same insight, described nature as "the time vesture of God." Lourie declared that the worlds "are predicates of the Absolute." And, of course, the poets have been affirming all along the eloquence of quiet trees and hushed stars and mute hills as they testify of God. What hills and stars say of God, of course, only becomes articulate in man. Man is nature's last effort to find expression, and only through him and in him does its real meaning come to utterance. Only to and through the psalmist or some rational self like him, do the "heavens declare the glory of God," or "day unto day utter speech," or "night unto night show knowledge." But the meaning is there awaiting man's interpretation, and to the seeing eye and understanding heart nature reveals something of the orderliness and beauty and sublimity of God.

Undoubtedly, the word of God has come to men of all times and all civilizations. The epochal missionary conference at Jerusalem, last year, made a part of its message to the world the recognition of "as part of the one Truth, that sense of the majesty of God and the consequent reverence in worship which are conspicuous in Islam; the deep sympathy for the world's sorrow and unselfish search for a way of escape which are the heart of Buddhism; the desire for contact with ultimate Reality conceived as spiritual which is prominent in Hinduism; the belief in a moral order of the universe and consequent insistence on moral conduct which are inculcated by Confucius; the disinterested pursuit of truth and of human welfare which are often found in those who stand for secular civilization, but do not accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour." In brief, those

gathered yonder near the scene of Christ's life to declare faith in him as the Supreme Word of God to man nevertheless were frank to recognize that God's word has not been limited to those who stood in the line of Hebrew and Christian tradition. That was a truly great recognition: great because it relieves God of the suspicion of having abandoned all the rest of the world to their own devices; great because it makes possible a more humble and sympathetic approach to people of other religions; great because it opens the way to a study of those religions which will remind us of forgotten values in our own. By knowing that word which came to them we shall better interpret the word which came to our fathers and to us. My old high-school manual used to say: "He who knows no other language but his own cannot even know his own."

The church has often been and still may be the voice through which the word of God arrives. That is the supreme emphasis of Roman Catholicism, an emphasis which Protestantism has often undervalued to its own hurt. We forget that it was the church which gave us the Bible and not the Bible which gave us the church. It was not until the fourth century that the books of the Scripture were selected and the canon fixed. The church was the fountain whence flowed the stream of sacred literature in the New Testament. More shall be said about the church in the next chapter, so it shall only be affirmed here that the collective Christian conscience, represented in the church, has often been and will continue to be the most significant expression of truth upon living crucial issues in domestic, political, industrial, and international life. I know to what depths General Conferences and Assemblies may fall, but at their high moments they speak a language which is surely an echo of the Divine.

Neither nature, Bible, nor church exhausts the avenues by which the word of God reaches us. The humblest individual whose sincerity and freedom from ulterior motives make his mind a free channel for truth, may challenge our lives at the very foundations by some fresh arresting utterance. Happy

are we if we do not permit our own pride and our scorn of the humble mouthpiece to close our ears against it. Wilfred T. Grenfell, the modern apostle to Labrador, said the other day: "I have got a clearer vision of what God means to a human life many times in Labrador cottages than I have in any cathedral." One night he was in a house when the last barrel of flour had been opened. It was then only early in November and there was nothing in sight in the way of food except what they could shoot or trap until June should come round again. The prospect was dismaying. "As I sat in the cottage, a knock came at the door and my friend went out into the entrance porch and I heard him talking with a neighbor. I then distinctly heard him ladling out flour from his barrel into a baking tin that the neighbor had brought.

"'What were you doing, Tom?' I asked him when he came back.

"'I was lending Uncle George a pan of flour.'

"'Is he out already?'

"'Yes, he is.'

"'Will he ever pay you back?'

"'I don't think he can.'

"'Then why do you do it, when your children are already hungry?'

"The man looked into my face and said simply, 'What would *you* do, Doctor?'" Just that and no more, but in that simple, yet profound utterance, penetrating to the very heart of life, Doctor Grenfell heard a clearer word than had been spoken in many so-called places of prophecy. And he knew it was the word of God because it searched his moral life to the core and awoke within him a new spirit of idealism and self-sacrifice.

Nor must we forget something else. "The word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth." There are times in every man's life when he must trust the revelation within: when there is no guidance in any utterance of church or book for new and unprecedented perplexity in which he finds himself, when the

counsel of godly friends is beside the point, when, like Abraham and Paul and Wesley and Joan of Arc, he must listen to the inner voices, for in those voices the Eternal has found an utterance denied him elsewhere. Such individualism may seem irrational, even insane, to those who have only a narrow view of the word of God. They may quote texts and repeat ecclesiastical decrees against it. But only as here and there some rare soul hears and is loyal to the word of God written in his own soul, will God's truth be revealed to and achieved in society.

IV

But if our notion of the word of God has been sometimes too inclusive, sometimes too narrow, it stands nevertheless for a reality, felt in experience, supported by philosophy, demonstrated in history. Our chief responsibility is the development of a judgment whereby false prophets may be rejected, false utterances repudiated, and the genuine word be recognized in whatever quarter it arises.

To us who are Christians Jesus Christ is the norm. God cannot be less than the highest which has appeared on the stage of history. To us that highest is Jesus Christ. Not only do we discern nothing or no one so high; we can conceive of nothing higher. He has become to us, therefore, the supreme word by which all other words are tested. Just as the multiplication table is an ultimate with which all mathematics must harmonize, so Christ is an ultimate with which all that claims to be the truth of God is to be measured. That makes room for endless development in religion as in applied mathematics, but it also provides a standard by which all development is judged.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHURCH IN MODERN SOCIETY

I

THE word church ought to convey, even to Heywood Broun, an idea which commands respect if not devotion. But such has been its fate, that to a multitude it stands for something futile if not positively mischievous. A recent writer in the Nation, who is seeking to make vivid the present alarming situation of the American family, can think of nothing more feeble with which to compare it than the American church. Ever and anon, intrigued with a challenging title, we pick up a book or a magazine only to discover another confession of reasons why somebody who describes himself as a Pilgrim of the Infinite has felt it necessary to quit the church if he is to pursue his quest with vigor and with some hope of success. All of which means either that men and women do not understand what the church really is or that the church does not understand its own permanent function and has therefore surrendered itself to the inconsequential or the illusory.

1. Sometimes the church has in expectation or in practice degenerated into just one more *place* to go. The law may seriously curtail the attractions that make their appeal on Sunday. Hence the restlessness, begotten by our hectic life, must find some other distraction than the playhouse or the dance hall or the field of professional sport. The church is at least that. It offers a change to those harried spirits who are bored with domesticity or are incapable of losing themselves in a book. Sometimes the sermon is actually interesting; sometimes a brilliant quartette and organist atone for the dullness of the pulpit. Occasionally—thank God, not often—there is a preacher who prides himself on his up-to-the-minute quality, who runs a perpetual show in the name of being attractive,

always fighting somebody, exposing something, having a parade of secret order regalia down the aisle, doing some one of the many tricks known to possess a "kick" for the curious. In either case the church is simply a Mecca for those who must have some place to go and who follow the promise of the greatest thrill.

Sometimes the church is a market place where men try to make bargains with the Almighty, offering him their presence on Sunday in return for protection and prosperity and peace during the week.

Sometimes the church is a mere preaching place. If the professional talker employed is an artist, those who care for eloquence or for the spiritual treasure which it may bring in its flaming chariots, will attend. But if something less than Apollos is in action, they feel no obligation to stir themselves from the easy chair and its proximity to a shelf of the world's best books. And even though there may stand in the pulpit one who speaks with the tongues of men and of angels and who in addition puts an eager heart of love behind his utterance, there is the radio. One business man said to his preacher the other day: "I do not get to church very often, but I always take time out on Sunday to hear at least one radio sermon." And he said that with the air of one who had offered a complete justification for himself. If a church is nothing but a place to hear sermons, he was almost right. He was hearing sermons; what more could you ask?

Sometimes the church is conceived primarily as a place for worship. That, again, is a conception not without its merits. When all the building committees in America rise even to that height we shall be delivered from the glorified store-boxes and gaudy showrooms which preceding generations, and even our own, have inflicted upon the public in the name of religion. A college professor who attends services in a beautiful Gothic structure, where every line in stone and glass and carved woodwork makes one think of the grace and beauty, the sublimity and power of the Eternal, said to me, "It does not matter very

much whether our pastor preaches or not; one cannot help being exalted in spirit after sitting for an hour in such an atmosphere." Blessed indeed the congregations where architecture and ritual and choral accompaniments make the church a sanctuary favorable to the mood of worship. But the church's chief claim is not that it provides material incentives to worship. The quiet woods and peaceful valley, the hills at sunset and the star-domed night do all that for us, sometimes infinitely better than the building which man's dull wit has cramped if not marred. So often, too, there is no connection established between worship and the world's work. Many churchgoers are ecstatic mystics, but they bring to the church nothing save a cup for ecstasy, because, again, the church is considered merely a place for that sort of experience. It is not as a place of any kind that we are to think of the church if we are to realize the opportunity it brings to us or the challenge it hurls at us.

2. The church is often regarded as an agency for the promotion of whatever anybody from selfish or unselfish motives considers good for humanity. Sponsors of "safety-week," "candy-week," "drink-more-milk-week," "ride-the-street-car-week," "a million-population-by-1930-week," "repeal-of-day-light-saving week," turn to my pulpit with earnest requests that a sermon be preached in behalf of their project. Fleeing from them as from a plague, the preacher runs plump into the arms of members of his own congregation who are devoted to one or another of the many humanitarian and reform movements which are abroad in the land and whose advocacy seems to them the very quintessence of religion. That such reforms are needed none will deny. That the church as a church has a contribution to make toward the achievement of many of them, not many preachers, least of all this one, would deny either. His voice has often been lifted and will be lifted again in behalf of industrial democracy, civil liberties for all our people, international peace, a womanhood emancipated from the seductions of the American Tobacco Company, employment for

every man who needs a job, a more just distribution of the goods of life. But the pulpit is not merely a forum for social agitation nor is the church a mere bureau of social research and a collection of committees by which concrete plans may be evolved for the abolition of social ills. All of these things it may inspire; few of them it will ever have the technique to achieve. As an agency for social reform it will always be somewhat amateurish and its leaders must suffer in comparison with those experts which more technical associations can provide.

3. Others have looked upon the church as a claimant to be the one visible channel through which divine grace can flow into the lives of its members, forgiving their sins, purifying their imagination, cleansing their affections, invigorating their moral wills. That is especially true of Roman Catholicism, and it represents a very strong drift within Protestantism. Bishop Gore, speaking as an Anglo-Catholic, declares that the task of redemption which Christ began is to be accomplished by the church, "the visible organ through which he is to act upon the world." The three marks of such a redemptive church he holds to be: (1) An apostolic ministry, one ordained by a bishop who had been in turn ordained by other bishops, and so on back to the apostles. (2) A body of doctrine based on the tradition which lies behind the New Testament. (3) The sacraments which "are divinely given and necessary instruments of spiritual grace," and which must be administered "according to the forms of the Prayer Book." For such a church is claimed the possession of the very keys of the kingdom of heaven.

If that is what the church is conceived to be, it is no wonder that it is now the object of distrust and contempt on the part of many without and an instrument of spiritual decay to many within. It does not square either with Jesus or with that part of the New Testament which is nearest to him. Nor does it tally with life itself. What Jesus actually left behind him was not an ecclesiastical hierarchy even in germ, but a brotherhood;

not a rite which "turns the officiant into a sacrificing priest," but a memorial which called them all to a voluntary fellowship of his sufferings as the way to win life; not an official religion, but a democracy of believers; not magical "offices," but a faith which worketh by love; not a Prayer Book, but a conviction of a loving God to whom the heart might turn as a child to its father. There is nowhere in the story of Jesus evidence of any interest whatsoever in ordinations and ceremonies, in rubrics and liturgies. You cannot imagine him entering into a debate over apostolic succession, the reservation of the sacrament, the invocation of saints, or bestowing attention upon that matter which seems of such importance to Bishop Gore that he exhorts, "Let the communicants enable the clergy to obey the rubric directing us to deliver the communion into the hands of the people by presenting their hands and *not the open mouth.*" Nor did Jesus ever even intimate any idea that membership in an authoritative body or participation in authorized sacraments were "as essential as individual faith."

And when we turn from the New Testament to life, this conception of the church seems even more absurd. Ministers and members of so-called "apostolic churches" do not give evidence in character and conduct of having received greater visitations of divine grace than the simplest believers in nonliturgical churches. Philosophically, the whole notion of spiritual gifts being shut up within and infallibly bestowed by a system of ecclesiastical acts and actors is the very essence of absurdity. If there is any spiritual value in preaching, it is because it fits life, not because it is in harmony with a tradition. If there is any benefit issuing from the Lord's Supper, it is not because the person who administers was ordained by somebody, but because the administrator bears the cross in his heart and the communicant dedicates himself to that cross. The kingdom of God cometh not with clerical ancestry nor through ecclesiastical etiquette.

There is a place for the church in the spiritual life of

humanity, but not as an official channel through which the flood waters pour irresistibly upon the souls of men if only it be constructed of a certain texture and after a fixed pattern.

II

What, then, is the church? In the New Testament sense it is primarily a spiritual society; the fellowship of those who have been born again, who by the appeal of God's love made to them in Christ have been turned from self to God and in that turning have been seized upon by new interests, have awakened to new values, are in a real sense new creatures, enthralled by an intense love for God and man. There may be a thousand people assembled to hear sound teaching and organized to achieve some justifiable end, but if they have not been infused with this Christ-inspired love for God and man, they do not constitute a church. There may be but a handful gathered in the dim light which forces its way in through the lone window of a shabby room on a back street, but if Christly love is there, there is a church. What is England? Is it that little island lying off the coast of France? Is it Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament and Windsor Castle? Is it the Labor Party or the Liberal Party or the Tories? Is it Scotland Yard or the Woolsack? Is it Oxford and Cambridge? Is it the Grand National Steeplechase or the Cricket Field at Eton?

> "If I should die, think only this of me:
> There is one corner of a foreign field
> That is forever England."

Wherever Rupert Brooke went, whether to Gallipoli or to Glory, there was England, because he carried in his soul a love for all that makes England great, a devotion to English ideals, a gratitude for England's benison. England is first of all a state of mind. Wherever that is not, though the English flag fly, and the English tongue be spoken and English taxes be

paid, England is not. Wherever that spirit is, there is England, though it dwell "east of Suez." The church is first of all a state of mind. It is the mind of Christ. Wherever that is not, though there be "glory of orator, warrior and song," magnificence of architecture and splendor of liturgy, efficiency of organization and marshaled multitudes, the church is not. But wherever two or three are gathered in His name, under the spell of His spirit, there is the church. That is fundamental.

Where there is a group, large or small, of men and women who through Christ have been born to an intense passionate love for God and man, some things are bound to happen. They will not be content with rhapsodic reverie nor ecstatic association. In the New Testament we see them organizing on the basis of love, sharing with each other their property, giving recognition only to service, esteeming every kindness, exalting hospitality, guarding the weak, practicing a beautiful charity, emphasizing humility, submitting individual opinions to the judgment of the group, evangelizing unbelievers, and creating a fellowship "in which even the drunkard and the harlot could find their souls," providing instruction for young and old, evolving a hymnology in which joy and longing alike found expression, practicing a few simple rites as dramatizations of the fundamental truths of religion and life. They did all this because their love for God and man compelled it. More than this they could not do; less, they would not do.

III

In its own way, suiting its activities to the needs of its own age and community, every genuine church of Christ will write history not unlike that of the church of the first century, for love is always characterized by an eagerness to help—to help men to God, to help God in his wrestle with men. A Christian church in any age is a helping church. Its membership will be famous for their ministrations to each other and to the community.

1. They will offer a rich and redeeming fellowship for hu-

man loneliness. One Pittsburgher sent me some lines yesterday written in the blood of his own heart. There are too many of them to quote fully here, but the poem begins:

> "I have a dream to place within the ground—
> Is there someone to walk along with me?
> . . . . . .
> For years it has been dead and yet my hope,
> Physician of my soul, with death did cope
> To clad in flesh its immortality."

It is a tragic picture of desolation, but it symbolizes a common experience. The longer I live to mingle with people in their homes or listen to their stories in the quiet of my study, the more impressed I am with the essential loneliness of folk in all conditions of life. I have seen people go down to the very gates of death because nobody seemed to care whether they lived or died, and actually rescued from the clutches of the grave by the discovery that somebody did care. Sometimes the greatest isolation is found, not where gaunt poverty dwelleth, but behind paneled doors and amid the luxury of a home where art had done its best to provide an answer to the heart cry of those who are to dwell there. It was out of his poignant sense of the need of humanity for companionship that Jesus anticipated what he believed to be God's final judgment upon those who refused, and his blessing upon those who took a sympathetic fellowship to the hungry and cold, the forsaken and the outcast.

This is the first mark of a true church. One of the greatest thrills which has come to me since undertaking the difficult ministry in the midst of the tides of life surging up and down the hills and valleys of an eerie, elusive, challenging city, was the testimony voluntarily given in several homes where I was calling this week: "You have such a friendly church. We attended elsewhere and no one even noticed our presence. But the very first Sunday we worshiped with you three or four people came up and shook our hands in genuine friendliness.

We felt like thanking them." Now, multiply that and intensify it. Let there be seen a cordial interest which not only puts a heart alongside theirs in the church auditorium, but follows them to their homes and into the difficult and dangerous places where they must walk when sickness and death come, and even worse, during the long drab days when the dullness is not even lighted by the fires of sorrow and when nothing but fellowship can redeem it from utter futility and boredom, and you have given to the world some evidence that a church of Jesus Christ has really taken form in the city.

2. A real church will be an evangel of truth to humanity within and without, for only truth brings the freedom which love seeks for its beloved. That means, of course, a free and unhampered pulpit. It means a devotion to children who represent at once the greatest need of truth (for all their life is yet before them) and also the greatest opportunity of truth (for their minds are not cluttered up with error). It means, therefore, a willingness to spend money for all the equipment and all the processes that enter into adequate religious education. The organization which gives over this delicate and divine ministry to amateurs and crowds it into the cellar of its purposes as well as its building may call itself a church but its action denies its name.

This conception of the church as a truth-giver means too that the individual members will themselves become evangelists, sharing with each other and carrying out to the world the truth which has evidenced itself in their own experience. The old testimony meeting which was once a fixed item on Methodist schedules, sometimes degenerated into hackneyed phrase and boresome repetition. Every week when a lad I used to hear one say, "Saved and sanctified, glory to God." He never added to or subtracted from that bromide. He never indicated what sanctification meant in daily life, in the struggle with his temper or with his creditors, in his relations with his family or with the community. His so-called testimony was a mere habitual movement of the throat muscles following a stretching

of limbs which put him on his feet in the midst of a group, who knew beforehand just what kind of a noise would be emitted. But behind the old testimony meeting, thus often abused, was a noble impulse and a deep conviction, namely, that one owed to his neighbor and to the world a share in the blessings which had descended upon his own life. It is difficult to see how any other conclusion is compatible with love or even honor. The patent-medicine man sees in a beneficial formula only an opportunity for personal profit: the true scientist, like Dr. Miguel Garcia, of Mexico, in his discovery of the use of alcohol as an anæsthetic, offers his secret to the world without money and without price, finding, in the rich increment to the world's happiness thus made possible, ample reward for his pains. He feels that anything less is dishonorable. The church claims the secret of the ages, the one formula which secures life against its greatest foes and makes it glow with radiance and power. Can we do less than offer it to the sons of men? We offer advice freely about housekeeping and dressmaking, about salads and complexions, about golf and bridge. Have we communicated to others any of the truth as we have found it in Christ? This is the test as to whether any of us belong to the church and whether there is a living branch of the true church housed in the building which we consent to call the church.

3. A real church will be the birthplace of spiritual children. Its members, constituted such because they themselves have had a new birth in freedom and righteousness, knowing all that such a rebirth means to human life, will be eager to surround others with the conditions which favor such an experience and will persist lovingly, but ceaselessly in their prayers until the sanctuary is gladdened with the cry of the new-born. Here is the place of genuine worship—not as an end in itself, but as a means of making the soul of man aware of its need of One who is able to answer that need by the impartation of his own life. Unless they who come to the sanctuary leave with a sense of God, triumphant over every other impression and hushing

their inner soul to awe as it arouses in them a deep and insatiable longing for better things, then ought we to be discontented with all our activities. One of the best women I ever knew, a glorious mother, a charming hostess, a merry friend, used to come up to me after service and say, "Oh Pastor, I am not a good woman; pray for me." It was not morbidity that was speaking there, for she was one of the sanest and most wholesome of spirits. It was the voice of one who had looked upon Infinite Beauty and had become freshly aware of defect. Such is the atmosphere of a true church.

But that is not all. If we love men, we shall desire for them not only awareness of fault, but that personal surrender to God which provides the remedy. We shall not merely stir them with the influences of worship, but shall lead them to the experience of regeneration. We shall so stimulate them by entreaty, so surround them with prayer, so inspire them with our own faith, that here in the twentieth century they shall turn from conventional attitudes toward money and power and social honors and shall know the glory of Him who though rich yet for our sake became poor, though possessed with power took on him the servant's estate, though worthy of honor faced shame, for the sake of a redeemed world. Unless that is taking place, Sunday after Sunday, until the whole city is aware that on this corner and that men and women are being transformed into the likeness of Christ, we have not created with all our building and organization a true church.

4. A real church, though never a mere reform agency, will create a passion for the transformation of society; because it knows that only in such a society is the abundant life possible. An élite journal carried approvingly a bit of Will Rogers' recent sarcasm: "A preacher just can't save anybody nowadays. He is too busy saving the nation. He can't monkey with individual salvation. . . . In the old days those fellows read their Bibles. Now they read the Congressional Record." Curiously enough, the same journal without recognizing its inconsistency carried another quotation from a profounder

and wiser man, Principal Jacks, of Oxford: "Breadwinning and soul-saving are not two independent operations. . . . I have no hesitation in saying that the chief reason why the various soul-saving enterprises now in being are yielding such meager results lies in a general overlooking of this elementary and everlasting truth."

In a word, a church that would save the souls of men must have a mind as to how people earn their daily bread and whether they earn it at all or not. It will be concerned about all the conditions under which they live. Souls are not saved in a vacuum, but in a society which either lends its influences to the process of salvation or makes any genuine salvation impossible.

A true church, therefore, will be a creative influence operating to produce socially minded folk who are concerned about politics and industry and international affairs and who are doing their best to make all the relationships of men the abettors of that process which has for its goal the birth and growth to maturity of sons of God.

CHAPTER XII

MORTALS AND IMMORTALITY

I

"THE Easter sermon was always the most difficult one in the whole church year." So spoke a well-known preacher who has left the pastorate for another post in the church. "It still is for me," replied one who has remained in the preaching ministry; "I never yet have delivered an Easter message with a sense of power and with evidence of blessing upon my congregation."

Such utterances are expressive of the difficulty which attends the effort to talk about immortality to a congregation of intelligent and successful people. They believe in the relative immortality of certain creations in art and literature and music and wish they had the genius to make such a permanent contribution to the race. They recognize that, in a real sense, a man and woman live on in their children and, if their own home has been gladdened by the presence of childhood, their one prayer is that the ideals they have cherished may survive in these reincarnations of their own life. They believe in a general way in the immortality of influence. What they do and say does not perish from the earth. It may pass out of sight, but it has affected some human life, which will in turn influence other lives and so, like Tennyson's echoes,

> "Roll from soul to soul
> And grow forever and forever."

All this sort of deathlessness I suppose every high-souled person honors and is not ashamed to seek for himself. But immortality in the sense of personal survival after death does not seem to be the object of interest and desire which it once was.

1. It has too often been connected with a depreciation of the

value of life here. We have been solemnly and vehemently assured that unless God gives us another and endless world to live in he has done us a great injustice in asking us to live at all. Such a dark picture is painted of man's earthly pilgrimage that we are left with the conclusion that a just God simply has to lead us out to some eternal triumph or be impeached at the bar of humanity on the charge of inhumanity. Against that appraisal of this life the minds of a multitude revolt. They have found life good. The chance to earn one's bread, to toil at an exhilarating task, to pick up a few choice friendships here and there, to play a little part in the drama of human progress, to lie down at night in a weariness that welcomes sleep and to awaken at bird-song to answer the call of new hopes and brave endeavors, seems to them, like the contemplation of beauty, in need of no ulterior reward to make it all worth while. An argument for eternal life which is based upon despair of this life finds less and less response in contemporary intelligence. Even those who have suffered greatly bear testimony that there have been compensations in their anguish and that the balance on the whole has been on the side of value. They are far from the persuasion that the universe owes them anything.

2. Immortality has sometimes been involved with the queerest notions of justice. It has been assumed that the sinner often has such a hilarious time here that doubt is cast upon the moral nature of the universe and that the only chance God has to save his face before onlooking angels is to keep the offender alive forever and by endless punishment demonstrate that the universe tolerates no evil anywhere, even for a minute of its endless existence. Only immortal pain was believed to be a sufficient recompense for the transgressions of three score years and ten and to be a proof that moral law is supreme and unchallengeable. At the same time it was often vociferously declared that a scallawag, frightened by the approach of death, making penitential prayers, would have all his past wiped out in a moment and at once be transported to

realms of eternal bliss, where he could conveniently forget the debauched boys and ruined girls whom he had damned and left to wander in the chill blackness of deepening moral night.

It is little wonder that an immortality connected with such gross caricatures of justice should gradually lose its fascination for the awakening moral insight of minds upon whom the light of Christ hath shone. Better no life after death than one which becomes either a torture for those not sufficiently punished by their own sins or an easy haven of escape for those who ought to be compelled to face and make amends for the destruction they have brought upon their fellows.

3. Immortality has lost its hold upon the imagination of many because of the sheer difficulty of framing any worthy conception of it. The material imagery of our ancestors—the city of gold about a great white throne, choirs and harps ceaselessly in action, white-robed saints wandering amid gardens of imperishable beauty, with no more responsibilities than the winter colony at Miami—all this seems not only crude but unattractive to men who love the stimulus of problems to be solved, the thrill of hazards to be met, the invigoration of a sense of enterprises awaiting sacrificial effort. And when they turn away from what seem to them to be the myths of social childhood and attempt to frame more intelligent notions, they are confronted with perplexing questions. How can a mind exist without a brain? If it does, what could be the nature of its employment and interests in a universe where there is nothing but disincarnate spirits? And before they proceed any further, they find themselves so bewildered, so unable to even think toward an intelligent declaration concerning matters so utterly beyond the pale of human experience that they relinquish the effort in despair and confine their attention to the possibilities of the present world.

II

Sympathizing with the reactions which have turned the minds and hearts of many away from the desire for or hope of im-

mortality, I come to you, my reader friend, in this closing chapter, to reaffirm my conviction that the mortal shall put on immortality, that death shall be swallowed up in life, and to join in the glad challenge of Paul, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Much of our difficulty grows out of a failure to comprehend on how broad a basis the hope of immortality rests. In it we are not dealing simply with the wish-complex of an exaggerated egotism. It is a conclusion which has its root in our deepest convictions as to the nature of the universe in which we live. I have been insisting that the universe is a unity, that values for one part are values for the whole, that what the universe is bent upon is revealed not in those failures which we classify as evil, but in all that which we are compelled to recognize as good, that the key to the understanding of the ultimate intention is in the very highest we know. That means that the universe is to be interpreted in terms of Christ. Than him nothing nobler has appeared to rivet the attention and command the intellectual respect and capture the purest affections and challenge the moral wills and stimulate the spiritual faculties of men.

> "That one Face, far from vanish rather grows
> Or decomposes but to recompose,
> Becomes my universe that feels and knows."

Christ was not an accident, an evolutionary spurt. He was the evidence in time of what has been at the heart of the universe through all its yesterdays and will be there through all its to-days and to-morrows. He was not a mere entrancing will-o'-the-wisp dancing over the deadly miasmatic swamp which gave him birth, its very antithesis in character. He was a disclosure of the eternal reality with which we have to do.

In the presence of such a description of reality some conclusions seem almost irresistible:

1. Personality is precious in its sight. Nothing was more characteristic of Christ than this, that he acted as if human

beings of all sorts, the bad and the good, the simple and the learned, publican and prophet, harlot and holy woman, drunkard and demoniac, were worth living for and dying for. One black sheep, lost from the fold, out in the sleet and storm and cold, was of sufficient value to drive a decent shepherd out upon the difficult search. One lost coin of womanhood so small and unimportant as scarcely to be missed by others, lying buried in the dust of society's forgetfulness, was in his eyes of such worth that he would disturb the whole social regime, shove about all its institutional furniture, raise a genuine commotion, until she was found and restored to her place in the family treasury. A prodigal son might trample a father's love under his feet, bring dishonor upon the family name, wallow in the mire of infamy and lust, but the father would sit in the gate every day to pray and hope for his return, an object of wonder in the neighborhood because of his ceaseless vigil of love. Jesus could turn even to a thief on the cross and say, "This day the gates of paradise open for you as well as me."

That is the kind of a soul Christ was, enraptured with personality, loving it in spite of its oft deformities, treating it as the one immutably precious thing on earth. Now, if he is, as our philosophy assures us, the key to the universe, to God, is it conceivable that God will be careless about the destinies of persons? Will he "treat the individuality of heroic souls like oyster shells at a banquet, whisked away from the table to make room for the next course?" Will he make personality "like a rocket which, once its cascade of stars has been displayed, has fulfilled its function and falls back unregarded into the surrounding gloom?"[1]

You see we are making a little different approach than that which we deprecated earlier in the chapter. What we are saying now is, not that we should not be treated fairly if God lets us perish without a better chance than we have here, but

[1] *Reality*, p. 314. The Macmillan Company, publishers. Reprinted by permission.

that the kind of a God declared in Christ could not be content to let one life be destroyed or "cast as rubbish to the void."

Our case rests not upon invincible logic, but upon an unconquerable conviction breathed into our hearts that in Christ we have at last a clue to the universe, a key to the Eternal Purpose in our behalf. A man off in a distant mountain village has been attempting to hear the New York Philharmonic. He has been a mountaineer all his life. He has loved music in his own rough way, has dreamed that there must be something nobler, more majestic than he has ever heard in his native hills, and so he has been listening eagerly for reports from beyond his horizon. He has had one crude radio after another, but they are all very imperfect. Once in a while a beautiful strain comes through and his heart almost leaps from his breast at the beauty and the sublimity of it. But it has been only an occasional strain that has so moved him. The batteries are weak. There is heterodyne in exasperating quantity. Much of the time the noises that are emitted by the crude amplifier are more like the squeals of a pig led out to slaughter. Even at best the basses are smothered, the violins are thin, the horns blast. It is all disappointing and bewildering. He does not know the meaning of all those raucous shrieks, but something tells him that they are not the symphony. He listens on, catching every now and then a fragment of beauty, just enough to make him sure that something very wonderful is off yonder if he could only learn what it is. Then one day some friend from over the mountains sends him a new instrument. He sets it up and sits down to listen. No static now, no smothered basses or shrill horns, but rich, resonant tones of the full orchestra as it moves on in splendor to the triumphant conclusion of a great creation. At last he knows he has heard a symphony. Its power and beauty bear their own convincing witness to his spirit. He has recognized the highest when he heard it. Thereafter all that purports to be music and any orchestra that calls itself Philharmonic must square themselves with the experience of that hour or be repudiated.

So through the centuries humanity has been listening to catch the strains of the Eternal Symphony. Once in a while in prophet and poet and saint a happy phrase arrived. But at best it was a smothered strain and there were many confusing noises and irritating discords. At last came Jesus and with him the most heavenly music. Through him there uttered itself into the ears of humanity a beauty, a perfection which brought its own convincing evidence. In him men are sure that they have heard from heaven. By what he was and said and did will they judge everything that purports to be the voice of God.

When anybody says that God is not interested in individuals and that he can toss them out of the matrix of creative life, amuse himself with their hopes and fears for a little while, and then let them sink back into nothingness, men will say: "No; that does not sound like God. We heard him once in Christ, and nothing that we heard there will chime with such a doleful conclusion. A God who could make earth vibrate with that reverence for personality revealed in Jesus must be too greatly concerned about us all to ever let us perish from his hands. It isn't what he owes us, but what he thinks of us, which makes us sure of that."

2. Nor is that all. The kind of a God Christ makes us sure of is one who needs other personalities for the fullness of his own life. The philosophers have their own way of stating this magnificent and convincing faith. They tell us that there can be no God apart from the world of manifestation; that the notion of an Absolute without a universe, self-sufficient, absorbed in the contemplation of his own perfections, is unthinkable; that our very finiteness is necessary to God; that, unless God is a mere abstraction, he only finds himself in "otherness"; and that our value to God lies in our very difference from him. To some of us this philosophic argument seems unanswerable.

Whether it seems so to all or not, the acumen which is revealed in its presentation ought at least to render our minds

hospitable to the declaration about the life of God made to us by Christ.

The one thing every student of the life of Christ recognizes as fundamental is his conviction that life exists only as it gives itself away; that only as we find someone on whom we can bestow ourselves can we find ourselves at all. "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it." It is the paradox of life that it must die in order to live, die for someone else in order that it may live in itself. A college student asked me the other day what that means. I will tell you. I can tell you best by the lament of the mother who has lost her boy.

> "If I to-day could mend a broken toy,
> To-morrow build a kite to reach the sky,
> No woman in all God's world could say
> That she was more content than I."

Many a mother and father alike have found that life, without someone to mend toys and build kites for, is a barren affair; so Jesus meant to say the very sacrifices we wish we could run away from are the ones we would pray most loudly to have returned, if they were taken away and we had time to discover what they meant to us. That is the chief thing Jesus came to say.

We all recognize that. Have we recognized that, in saying it, he was talking not about us only, but about God? He said it because it was the very nature of the Reality from which he came and with which we all must live. He was not giving advice to us, but testimony about God. In a word, we individuals in our individuality, in our otherness, are and have been from all eternity and will be to all eternity a necessity to the life of God. If God must live for others, he must have others to live for. His life is life only as it is lost in ours. We are complete in him and he is complete only in us.

All sorts of difficult problems for thought lie in such a conception, notably the problem of the temporal emergence of man as a necessity in a life that is eternal. But in the presence

of the universal demand of our experience for others by whom and in whom alone our lives are complete we cannot doubt that we are dealing with a fundamental aspect of reality; that there is the same demand in the life of God; that we are a necessity to God, not merely as we are now with all our imperfections, but as we may become through the bestowal of his grace upon us, in which bestowal he and we find our consummation. One says that not boastfully but humbly, but also with a deep conviction of its truth.

3. In such a conviction we have moved out beyond the old argument from the conservation of values. That argument declared that a rational God would not be likely to permit the serenity of a Socrates, the insight of a Plato, the courage of a Savonarola, the triumphant selflessness of a Saint Francis, the rugged honesty of Luther, the evangelical passion of a Wesley, the stately loyalty of a Washington, the homely majesty of a Lincoln to perish from the universe. He must prize all that more than all the star clusters in the firmament.

It was an interesting argument, but it has been offset in some minds by the consideration that God could preserve all these values without maintaining the personalities in which they were developed. He might absorb them into his own infinite life. One great religion numbers millions of adherents who believe just that and are taught such an absorption as the goal of all human endeavor. But if God needs others to whom he can give himself, then his need is not going to be supplied by any absorption into himself. These others must remain in a genuine sense others. Without violence or irreverence the famous utterance of Saint Augustine might be made to read: "Thou hast made us for thyself, and *thy* heart can find no rest until it finds a home in *us*."

III

An immortality which is the result of the very necessities of the life of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, must have a character in harmony with those necessities. We cannot dog-

matize, but we can indulge some reasonable expectations. If the best that is in us is a necessity to the eternal life of God, then provision must be made for its continuance through activity.

Surely, then, in eternity there will be a place for the creation of beauty. That is the perpetual significance of those pictures in Revelation of a city built of gold and precious stones, of symphonies played by heavenly orchestras, and of thrilling anthems sung by voices of the redeemed. These expressions of beauty in art and architecture, in choral and instrumental music are a lame but joyous affirmation that beauty belongs to ultimate reality and in the "life that shall endless be" provision will be made for the realizations of which our earthly creations are but a poor shadow. Grandmother used to say half in pleasantry, half mournfully, "I couldn't carry a tune in a basket," but her utter confidence about the future flamed out when she said, "But I shall sing over yonder." Please God, we shall all have opportunity to express the sense of beauty which his love has set in our hearts here as a prophecy of what we shall be and do forever.

And, of course, the God of all truth will need in the universe spirits to whom truth may be given. The scientist who has sought by the way of experiment, the philosopher who has sought by the way of reason, and the religionist who has sought by the way of prayer, will continue to seek, only more successfully, the one truth which will bring them all into harmony with each other and open the way to unending discovery.

And, finally, the God of all love will need a universe of spirits whom he can love and in whose love for each other the desires of their hearts and his shall be satisfied.

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